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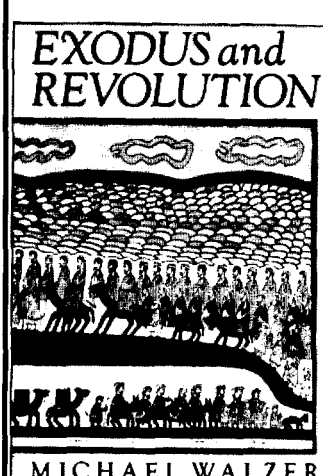

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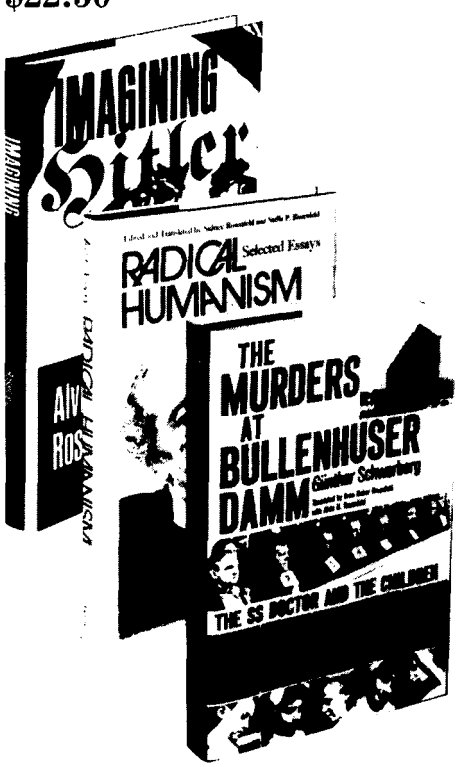

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Remembering Selma in Black and White

Nicolaus Mills

When the Selma crisis began, 20 years ago this spring, the country was ready for it. Before Selma there had been the Woolworth sit-ins, the freedom rides, and in 1964 the Mississippi Summer Project. By the time Selma began, the "Southern Way of Life" had lost credibility. When Alabama state troopers attacked a column of black marchers as they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge, one did not ask why the marchers failed to turn back as they were ordered. Even the deaths at Selma—first Jimmie Lee Jackson, then James Reeb, then Viola Liuzzo—brought with them a sense of *déjà vu*. Six months earlier there had been James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner.

A week after the "Bloody Sunday" attack on Pettus Bridge, Lyndon Johnson went before Congress to propose the Voting Rights Act of 1965, delivering the strongest civil rights speech by any president in this century. "What happened in Selma is part of a far larger movement that reaches into every section and state of America. It is the effort of American Negroes to secure for themselves the full blessings of American life," the president declared. "Their cause must be our cause too." The following Sunday a second Selma-to-Montgomery march began. This time the marchers were protected by the National Guard and led by Martin Luther King, Jr., and four days later, when they arrived in Montgomery, they were welcomed by a crowd of 25,000, most of whom had flown or bused in from the North.

□

Like most of my generation, those of us who finished college in the early 1960s, I look on Selma as the high point of the civil rights movement. After Selma there was Watts. Then Stokely Carmichael's version of "black power," and finally the urban riots of 1967. But it is not nostalgia that I feel for Selma. My memories of it are more mixed, black and white pictures that even now seem almost as clear as they were two decades ago.

It is the *New York Times* front page picture of March 8, the day after Bloody Sunday, that remains the most searing. The picture is not at all sharp. The overcast Selma afternoon, the photographer's distance from the violence have muted the clarity the picture should have. But the graininess of the photo, its lack of art make it more indelible to me. It brings to life the television footage of the night before, then freezes it. The picture is dominated by Alabama state troopers as they sweep from left to right, clubbing marchers who have fallen, rushing ahead like cavalry to inflict as much damage as they can on the enemy. The *Times* picture is not essentially different from those of a year before, of Birmingham authorities turning fire hoses and dogs loose on black demonstrators. Only here the violence is perfectly controlled, systematic. There is no looking at this picture and saying, you do not see it all. The only serious question is, will you enter the picture frame? Are you prepared to be more than a witness?

The second picture I remember is a much happier one, "Marchers on U.S. 80 after Crossing Edmund Pettus Bridge." It was taken on the day the second Selma march began. It is the kind of panoramic shot the wide-angle lens and helicopter have made possible. I am in this picture, somewhere toward the middle, near the left side of U.S. 80. Of course, I cannot be seen. Nobody's face, not even those of the men leading the parade—Martin Luther King and on either side of him Ralph Bunche and Ralph Abernathy—can be seen. The anonymity of this picture is, I find, reassuring. It reflects the fact that at its best the civil rights movement was a mass movement, made possible by a wide range of sacrifice rather than the heroism of a few. And yet there is something about this second photo that makes me uneasy. It hides the fact that all along U.S. 80 the federalized Alabama National Guard was riding shotgun. It mutes the shouts of "White Nigger" that came from everywhere and the farm children with their BB guns,

(Continued on p. 251)

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Muriel Gardiner

(1901–1985)

We have lost a dear friend.

Muriel Gardiner was a distinguished psychoanalyst, author of several valuable books on psychological and social themes, and the wife of Joseph Buttinger, a leader of the Austrian socialist movement during the 1930s and, for many years now, a member of the *Dissent* editorial board.

As a young woman, after graduating from college, Muriel Gardiner went to Vienna, to attend medical school and study there with the Freudian analysts. By 1932 Austria had been taken over by a fascist regime that was persecuting the suppressed socialists. Muriel met and fell in love with a leader of the socialist youth, Joseph Buttinger, and then, with that quiet and calm modesty that would mark her entire life, she proceeded to help the antifascists. Adopting the code name Mary, she offered her apartment as a safe house for the underground, arranged false passports for fleeing dissidents, and helped with money.

Back in the United States, Muriel became a practicing analyst and writer. She wrote *The Wolf Man*, a valuable follow-up to a major case study by Freud; *Code Name Mary*, an account of her years in Austria; as well as other books and papers.

I first met Muriel 31 years ago, when we were starting *Dissent*. We approached Joe and Muriel for help, and they quickly, with a fraternal ease, contributed a thousand dollars—half the amount that formed our initial "capital." Over the years, whenever we hit a rough spot, we knew we could count on Joe and Muriel. For while she had been born to wealth, she lived simply, almost austerely, and looked upon her money as a resource for helping others and benefiting good causes.

She was a remarkable woman, a splendid human being—I say this not as the ritual one engages in at a moment of death, but out of complete and strong conviction. Forthright, simple, unpretentious yet dignified, she struck me as really belonging to a generation somewhat older than herself—the generation of early feminists, settlement-house workers and labor activists like Jane Addams, Lillian Wald, Rose Schneiderman. Not herself a political activist, she was firm, sometimes even a little strict, in her political convictions: a socialist since early youth, and quite ready to help all sorts of people in trouble and all sorts of groups and communities that seemed to her beneficial. I thought of her as one of the last representatives of a certain line of Americans: independent, critical, naturally inclined to a certain rebelliousness, hostile to all sorts of cant.

Even toward the end she was full of wit, vitality, passion. It was a pleasure to be her friend, an honor to be her comrade.

—I. H.

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What's Ahead for America?

1. Gus Tyler

A Case for Economic Redistribution

Among all the uncertainties of current politics in America, one event—I think—is certain. In the elections of 1986 the Democrats will score a victory: they will increase their majority in the House of Representatives and will capture the Senate.

The seers will see significance in this. Some who measure mass moods will discover a "swing to the left"; others will attribute the result to a Democratic shift to the right. Analysts who seek more specific explanations will point to some Reagan gaffe, a recession (if there is one), the leadership of Tip O'Neill, a surge of political action by unions, a backlash against the Moral Majority, an uprising of women, the skills of the new chair of the Democratic National Committee, and so on.

While it is impossible, a priori, to deny the validity of any of these explanations, most of the Democratic victory will derive from a much more transcendental human trait: the predominance of hate over love in American elections. The recurrent proof of this psychopolitical law is the "midterm phenomenon" in America. In this century, in every midterm election, the party in the White House lost seats in Congress. The reason? People who love the party in power are confident that as long as their man is in the White House all will be well with their beloved country. They relax, and fewer of them turn out on Election Day. Those who are hostile to the Administration, driven by hate and fear, turn out in relatively greater numbers. So naysayers, in midterm elections, have an edge over yeasayers.

The only exception to this rule—it proves the rule—is 1934, Roosevelt's first midterm election. The Great Depression was so traumatic that the voters were not content to vote against Hoover in 1932 alone; they were still spilling their spleen two years later in the midterm to increase Democratic strength in Congress. But, in subsequent years, although FDR was reelected and reelected again, in the midterm elections his party lost seats in the legislature.

There will be, of course, a few politometricians—the modern numerologists—who will point out that the Democratic gains in 1986 exceeded the average gains in midterm elections; they will attach some special interpretation to that. But there may be no more significance to this "above-average" gain than there is to the usual midterm "victory." For 1986 will be no usual midterm election; it will be a special variant of the midterm phenomenon—the sixth-year slump. This ailment hits a party when it has been in the White House for two consecutive terms. In the midterm of the second term (the sixth year in power), the party in the White House gets hit hard, harder than in a run-of-the-mill midterm.

In the light of all this history, we must conclude that the victory the Democrats score in 1986 will, in and of itself, tell us nothing about just what it is the American people are mandating.

Having written this, my first impulse is to strike out everything I have said so far and to invent a myth in which I foretell the defeat of the Republican party in 1986 because the American people will have come to their senses, and, fed up with the governing of Ronald Reagan, will give a mandate to pursue a progressive political course. Such

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myths are useful and, since I am both a partisan and an activist, I will undoubtedly someday regret that I debunked in advance the meaning of the Democratic triumph in '86. I will have forgone the chance to say: "The people have spoken; they want a reborn liberalism."

Having turned this matter over in my mind—shall I speak a useless truth or spin a useful myth?—I decided to stick with the truth, less for ethical than for practical reasons. For whatever it is that I—and others—may say after the Democratic victory in 1986, the official voices of the Democratic party will announce that the Democrats must have been doing something right to win the election and that the party will hold the course. But just what the Democrats will be doing between now and the day after the midterm election is not necessarily what America needs. And if it is not what's good for the country, it would be most unfortunate if the Democrats believed that their victory in 1986 was wrought by their informed virtue and not by the luck of the draw.

WHAT THE COUNTRY NEEDS *is a redistribution of income.* More precisely, it needs a reversal of the present redistribution that has enriched the top one-third and has depressed the lower two-thirds. An equitable redistribution—more for the two-thirds and less to the one-third—is desirable for sound economic, as well as ethical, reasons.

Ethically, the fact of poverty (more of it) amidst plenty (more of it) is repulsive. Yes, there is more plenty: average family income has risen; yes, there is more poverty—both the number and percentage of people in poverty have risen painfully.

The social consequences of this, today, are what they were in the time of Plato. "Wealth and poverty," says Socrates in *The Republic*, "the one is the parent of luxury and indolence, and the other of meanness and viciousness, and both of discontent." The old gadfly warned of the turmoil to follow: "Whenever you see paupers in a state, somewhere in that neighborhood there are hidden away thieves and cutpurses and robbers of temples, and all sorts of malefactors."

But, setting aside considerations of civic virtue and social peace, our present maldistribution is economically perilous. Capitalism is a market economy. The base of that market is the 80 or so percent of the population that lives by wages and salaries. (In recent years, 57 percent of all national income came from wages and salaries.) If that base is weakened, the market is weakened—and so is our market economy.

Liberals and radicals, in the light of Keynes or Marx, know that. Marx concluded that capitalism would, by its greedy exploitations, destroy its own market and commit suicide; Keynes said that it was possible, with proper governmental intervention, to save capitalism from itself. In practice, modern liberalism has been Keynesian; the Marxists and neo-Marxists have not outright assailed Keynes but have been playing a waiting game, counting on the time when capitalism will reject Keynes, and the "final conflict" ensues.

Both liberals and radicals, however, in their daily struggles have worked for a more equitable distribution of income. Keynes himself was forthright on this: the two inherent faults in capitalism were its repeated relapses into depressions and its irrational and inequitable division of wealth. And for many decades "redistribution"—some philosophers called it "distributive justice"—was the core of the progressive push in America.

Now the word has gone out of fashion. We don't mention "redistribution." Its seeming substitute—"fairness"—is vague and understood by different groups (women, minorities, illegal aliens, immigrants, seniors, juniors) in as many ways as there are subcultures in the nation.

But even those who think of themselves as Keynesians have, in recent years, devoted themselves to only one-half of his program—governmental measures, fiscal and monetary, to stimulate the economy when it fell into a slump. These measures were (a) to cut taxes so that consumers would have more to spend; (b) to loosen the money supply; (c) to have the state borrow money and spend it to prop up the market (demand) that was momentarily lacking. The other half of the program—redistributing the income so that there would be a natural market for the economy, so that government would not have to run up indebtedness too often—has been neglected, indeed forgotten.

The reelection of Reagan has put a silence on any remaining talk of redistribution. After all, if he got the biggest electoral vote ever, he must be doing something right and appealing. In Democratic ranks, at the moment, the prevailing posture is that if the country wants what Reagan wants, then the Democrats must act more like Reagan. And when the Democrats win in 1986, they will be confirmed in their belief that the party does best when it is more conservative.

But the Democratic interpretation of what the nation wants, or needs, as drawn from Reagan's reelection may be faulty, if Democrats hold that it was Reagan's economic conservatism that gave him his big vote. If the election was a mandate for him to go right on, why did the same electorate fail

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to elect enough Republicans to give them control of the House, and why did the Democrats defeat enough Republicans to weaken their control of the Senate? Beyond that, there were many other issues and emotional forces at work. If the Democrats, however, were to step back and objectively view Reagan's primary *economic* policies, they would find that Reagan is immersed in Keynes up to his keester. We are talking about that first half of the Keynesian theorem—the part that deals with stimulating the economy.

Reagan cut taxes; he loosened the money supply; he went in for deficit spending with an abandon hitherto unknown. He did all these things for the wrong reasons; but he did them. He cut taxes to enrich the rich; but to do so he sugarcoated the bill with an across-the-board cut. He pressured the Federal Reserve Board into lowering interest rates and allowing the money supply to expand beyond target levels, because he needed an upbeat economy for the 1984 election. He borrowed and spent, because he wanted a big stick with which to beat the Bear. The tax cut alone didn't do it: 1981 and 1982 were recession, near-depression, years. But by the end of 1982 lowered interest rates and bigger deficits turned the trick. Recovery was on the way. (The drop in the price of oil—because of a world glut—also helped.)

Without a more equitable redistribution of income these stimulants—that's what they are—will wear off. And they have been wearing off during 1984 as maldistribution became more malicious. In a review of the way income was distributed in 1984, Joseph W. Duncan, corporate economist of Dun-Bradstreet Corp. and former chief statistician of the Office of Management and Budget, notes that a smaller share went to wages and a bigger share to interest and proprietors. Of the growth in national income (and there was growth), wages, normally comprising 57 percent of national income, fell to 50 percent; interest, normally comprising 14 percent of national income, rose to 22 percent; and proprietors' income, normally making up 5 percent of the national income, rose to 10 percent. In short, owners of businesses and substantial bank accounts did better; workers did worse.

The symptoms of a coming recession (depression) are already here—as any Keynesian who did not forget the second part of the theorem should suspect. The first quarter of 1984 showed a 10 percent growth rate. (Those Keynesian stimulants have lost little of their virility.) But by the second quarter growth was down to about 7.5 percent; by the third quarter it was down to 1.6 percent, and by the fourth quarter—with a big Christmas markdown on prices to get rid of overstuffed inventories—to about 3 percent. Put simply, growth in the first half of 1984 was about 8.5 percent; in the second half it was about 2.2 percent. Not good. This does not mean that the country must necessarily fall into a recession (depression) in 1985 or even 1986. Reagan may yet double the dosages of Keynesian medicine.

• *Redistribution of our national income*, as I have said, is the first item on this economic agenda. Without it, the country will be hooked, an economic junkie in need of repeated injections of indebtedness. This mounting debt will become a major, and fairly novel, device for the redistribution of income *from earners to owners*, from taxpayers to holders of Treasury notes. Up to recently, servicing the national debt ate up about 6 percent of the budget. Now it eats about 13 percent, and it will soon take 20 percent. In effect, wage-earning and salaried households will be taxed to pay off holders of Treasury notes—redistribution of income in the wrong direction.

To reverse this trend should be at the very top of the Democratic agenda. If there is going to be any tax reform, the most important consideration—far more important than simplicity and the amount collected—must be tax equity. Any tax reform that perpetuates the present unfair tax system endangers the total economy.

• *Job opportunities*—job preservation and expansion, with special emphasis on *industrial* employment—must be the second item on the economic agenda. This requires dimensions that go beyond the simple Keynesian formula of pump-priming. If Uncle Sam runs a federal deficit of $130 billion (once a powerful stimulant) and if an equal sum of $130 billion goes overseas to pay for our trade deficit, then the government is pouring its elixir into a leaky bucket. America cannot afford to run the kind of trade deficits it has been incurring in the last several years.

To return to something resembling a balance, America must pursue two parallel strategies: first, regulation of trade—multilateral, if possible, but unilateral if necessary; second, an industrial policy that consciously encourages the flow of capital to the modernization of obsolescent sectors of the manufacturing economy. Such a dual and complementary policy—the secret of most of Japan's success—serves three purposes. It strengthens employment, maintains America's industrial brawn without which we cannot continue to be a serious power in world politics, and also checks the drift of once well-paid smokestack workers into the service

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economy where, on the average, their wages are halved. Indeed, argues Duncan, the drop in labor's share of the national income in 1984 was caused, in part, by "a shift by workers who formerly had high-paying heavy industry jobs, into lower-paying positions in services."

• *Updating the minimum wage* is the third item on this economic agenda. For many years this "floor," running at about 50 percent of the average hourly wage, was the "safety net" for millions of American workers. Today that floor has sunk and is sinking. In 1950, the minimum wage of 75¢ an hour was 54 percent of the average wage. Between 1950 and 1968, the minimum was adjusted regularly to represent 50 or more percent of the average. Then, in the '70s, came inflation without adjustment in the minimum wage. By 1983, the minimum had fallen to 41 percent of the average, and by November 1984 it was 39 percent—and is still falling.

• *Fourth on the agenda* is tackling our fractured infrastructure and what's ailing and polluted in our surroundings (the environment). We need action in both these areas to stay alive and offer millions of people an opportunity to make a living. How can we afford this last item at a time when we are running $200 billion deficits annually? The answer is to run the economy at maximum capacity. Our present "structural deficit" assumes that "full employment" is defined as 6 percent unemployment. That "natural" rate of unemployment costs Uncle Sam $180 billion a year in lost revenue and unemployment-related costs.

If we put the presently unemployed to work—the officially unemployed and the "discouraged" workers and the involuntary part-time workers—the savings to Uncle Sam would be in the vicinity of $300 billion. And this is not the limit! There are millions of women, teenagers, and older people—not now active in the labor market—who would become active job-seekers once the economy offered openings.

Yes, we *can* "spend" our way out of our hardships, we have done it before. In 1932 the federal debt was $22 billion, the GNP $55 billion. The debt was 40 percent of GNP. Then came years of "spending," wars against countries over there and wars against poverty over here. By 1970, the debt had risen to $192 billion, but the economy had grown so prodigiously that the debt was only 19 percent of GNP.

A caveat: spending alone won't do it. The year is not 1932, when the American economy was a near-autarchy, when such words as "environment" and "infrastructure" were not part of our political lexicon, when federal income taxes were negligible for individuals, and when corporations were actually shouldering a huge chunk of the tax burden. Items One to Four of the agenda proposed above are not frills to suit our sensitive fancies; each is a *sine qua non* of future policy.

THE PROGRAM we have adumbrated (there is much more), necessary as it may be, won't be easy to sell to the electorate right now. The minimum wage, pop opinion has it, is "inflationary" and bad for young workers who get priced out of the market. "Infrastructure" and "environment" are chores for the locals. Regulating trade is "protectionism." Guiding any capital flow is "socialist" planning. Tax policy should be directed toward creating more capital, not more consumption. "Equity" means ownership in the accountant's sense, not justice in the philosopher's sense.

The folks who hold these notions dear, having in many instances invented the argument to begin with, are in that upper one-third of the nation who have been doing affluently these days. They are no mean political force: they are articulate, well-heeled, and active voters. Indeed, on that last point, this one-third may cast as many votes on Election Day as the other two-thirds. Add to their power at the polls their power to persuade, and they are a formidable factor.

Not all of these are the traditional bourgeoisie nor even the petit-bourgeois shopkeeper. Many are Yuppies, self-employed professionals, in medicine, accountancy, partners in law firms, hi-tech companies. In 1984, these "small-business" proprietors saw their share of the national growth in income actually double. Although some of them come out of the revolutionary '60s, they have been cooled in "the big chill" and won't be easy to thaw. It's not in their short-term self-interest to "redistribute."

The likelihood is that, in pursuit of votes, many Democrats will take on the coloration of Yuppiedom. Although the current economic clichés of these *nouveaux riches* reflect the special interest of a special class, the members of this class—like those of all classes before them—think their opinions coincide with the needs of the nation. To them, the "special interests" are welfare mothers, union members, auto workers asking for domestic content, farmers seeking subsidies, families on Food Stamps, and, occasionally, some hard-hit corporation—provided it is not their employer or client. Unwittingly they have turned definitions topsy-turvy: once the affluent were the "special interests" and the nonaffluent were "the people," the embodiment of the common weal.

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It won't be easy for the Democratic party, as a whole, to accept this attitude. Traditionally, the Democrats have been the party of the people—and they still are. But to the extent that there are current pressures on the party, they are the pressures of the *nouveaux* and would-be rich—pushing to the "right."

Because of this, it would be unrealistic to expect that the progressive push—in ideas and ideology, in popularization and propaganda—will come from the Democratic party per se, any more than the New Deal came from the Jim Farleys of 1933. The push has to come from the "outside," from those who are in the mainstream of the Democratic party electorate but will see beyond the next election, and will press for programs for the coming decade and the new century.

If the outsider-insiders do their work with diligence and intelligence, making a special effort to communicate with the congressional "freshmen" in their preelection gestation, the Democratic victory in 1986 may well be a victory for America. □

2. Michael Harrington

If There Is a Recession — and If Not

Given two diametrically opposed projections of our economic and political future, what should the response of the left be?

I pose the issue in this uncertain way for a reason. The United States and the other advanced industrial economies are in the midst of a transition from one economic-social-political paradigm to another. Dramatic technological changes are under way: GM's new Saturn automobile is scheduled to be built in an automated, robotized process that will reduce the total labor cost per car from its present level of 55 hours to 21 hours (in 1979, it was nearly 80 hours per car). At the same time, it is clear that the Keynesian welfare-state policies, which seemed totally triumphant in the '60s, no longer work. And we are about to import automobiles from South Korea . . .

When an economic-political paradigm is in its maturity, prediction is simple; next year will be like last year with some small shifts, up or down. The co-variations function nicely—an X increase in unemployment yields a Y decrease in interest rates, all other things being equal—and pedestrian analysts can appear to be seers. But when one is in between paradigms it becomes extremely difficult, if not impossible, to project the future. The profound recession of 1982–83 was, it will be remembered, universally anticipated as a short and shallow down-turn.

This is why I take two contradictory scenarios as my point of departure. One sees a recession within the next two years and tries to explore what that means for the progressive forces in American society. I must admit that I expect something like this to take place (I am somewhat bothered that so many others, including business economists, agree; for that, in recent times, is a sign of error).

The second scenario—that American society has turned a corner and embarked on a new, expansionary stage—strikes me as implausible, perhaps even impossible. Indeed, it seems to me that this is a model for chronic overproduction and underconsumption. But I have put my doubts into parentheses and asked, if somehow this economic oxymoron should come to life—a low-wage, high-tech growth society—what should the response of the left be?

Underlying all this is a central point that will serve as the leitmotif for these comments: if a new economic crisis breaks out, the left is not "saved," but confronted with a situation for which it is quite unprepared. And if Ronald Reagan's dreams come true, the left is not defeated, but could find a new

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relevance. Events are not going to revive or destroy us. How we respond to events may.

ASSUME, THEN, that in the fourth quarter of 1985 or the first quarter of 1986 there is a recession. It is, let us say, not as severe as the last one was. Unemployment rises "only" to 9.5 percent. Further, let us give more credit to the president than he deserves and hypothesize that the federal deficit is running at a rate of "only" $200 billion. Thus, as the recession gathered momentum and joblessness rose, the deficit would increase to $275 billion because of both the lost revenue and triggered entitlements of some 3 million additional men and women out of work.

This development, obviously, would utterly destroy the economic fairy tales of the 1984 campaign and the 1985 inaugural address. We could all join in blaming Reagan for having structurally reduced the tax base through giveaways to the rich, thereby preventing the recovery from significantly lowering the federal deficit. We could then rightly say that the monetarist meat ax used to fight inflation had destroyed jobs in the export industries and kept real interest rates excessively high, even under conditions of very rapid economic growth in the first three quarters of 1984. History thus would savage the George Gilder and Jack Kemp idylls about the entrepreneur as *deus ex machina.*

• *What would the left propose?* Deficit spending? Easy money? Those are the traditional answers of the last 50 or so years. But under the conditions I have sketched, both would quite likely lead to making the William Simon fantasies about "crowding out" come true. In 1973, Simon and a good part of the business community insisted that the "irresponsible" and "utterly lavish" social spending of the '60s—which, in fact, never took place—had crowded business out of the money markets because it was unable to compete with a federal government borrowing all that money to pay for its profligacy.

That, we now know, was nonsense. At the very moment that the Chase Manhattan Bank was engaged in a nationwide advertising campaign around the "crowding out" theme, it was so awash with liquidity—including recycled petrodollars—that it was roaming the Third World looking for borrowers. And we know that, even though Reagan's Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 cheapened capital and subsidized savings, it was followed by an investment bust and a decline in savings. The problem, it turned out, was not a lack of investment funds but the structure of a chronically malfunctioning economy.

Yet soon, in 1986 or so, Simon's nightmare could come true, not as a result of Democratic liberality but as a consequence of the very Republican policies that he himself supported. So deficit financing, starting at a base of $275 billion, would be enormously problematic, particularly if the foreign lenders who have been financing about half of Reagan's deficits decided that the U.S. was no longer the best investment. In 1983 interest on the national debt—which goes primarily to rich Americans, rich foreigners, and some federal employee pension funds—already cost more than the total spending for all means-tested programs. With the deficit nearing $300 billion in our scenario, room for traditional Keynesian maneuver would be, to put it mildly, circumscribed.

Easy money? Under the circumstances we have assumed, there would have to be such a massive infusion of credit into the economy that inflation would become an immediate threat. One could go on detailing possible effects—how the superdollar would turn anemic with the consequent disruption of international money markets brought on by any sudden change—but the point is clear enough. The constraints created by Ronald Reagan will make it impossible for the democratic left to turn to its standard answers in the event of even a not-so-severe recession.

• *What are our alternatives?* Though I will advance a traditional theme before turning to some more innovative ideas, I want to begin my answer with a plea for boldness. It is inspired in part by the radicalizing effect of a book upon me, written by a right-wing populist—Newt Gingrich's *Window of Opportunity.* This book is the most bizarre amalgam of the imaginative and the reactionary I have yet encountered and seems to have been written jointly by the Tom Hayden of 1962 and the Jerry Falwell of 1985. And it dares to be different. For instance: "We should consider a nutrition program which made the most basic foodstuffs—flour, cheese, rice, red beans, and a dozen similar items—available free or at nominal cost in grocery stores to anyone who wanted them."

That proposal is populist (or even socialist) in its advocacy of free food. It is conservative in that it proposes to abolish Food Stamps in return for a monotonous, minimal—free—diet. Gingrich is for an industrial policy through which the government would subsidize a new space industry and then turn it over to the private sector. "Conservatives who resist this active government role," he writes in one of the most striking political passages in recent years, "must be reminded that you cannot keep Panama Canals unless you first build them." The

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left, then, should be as ready to take chances as this Reagan radical.

This means, first of all, dealing with the money problem by a major cut in defense spending and a progressive tax reform as forthright as Reagan's regressive tax law of 1981. I will not linger over the first part of this proposal, since one's attitude toward military outlays is primarily determined by concern for national security, not for balancing the budget. (Who, during World War II, would have argued that we could not "afford" the defeat of fascism?) I will only note that I think large reductions in our present dangerous arms spending could enhance our national security as well as facilitate negotiations with the Soviets.

Taxing the rich requires a bit more comment. Until quite recently, it was a standard article of liberal faith that the huge "tax expenditure budget" of deductions for the wealthy was one of the most important potential sources of funds for social programs. But then two distinct groups turned away from that notion. The neoliberals bought the conservative argument that excessive government spending was a major cause of low investment levels and declining productivity. This is one of the reasons the Bradley–Gephardt tax proposal is "revenue neutral"—that is, simplifies but does not redistribute—compensating for abolished deductions by providing lower, overall rates. Small wonder that Rep. Kemp said he would be willing to unite with Bradley–Gephardt by splitting the small differences between their bills.

The neoliberals will be hard hit if my scenario of a modest recession comes true. Clearly, education for high tech is not an immediate response to 9.5 percent unemployment (it is not a long-range response either, but that is another story). But other liberals do bother me more. These people admit to the desirability of a tax reform that actually redistributes burdens in a fairer and more democratic way. But, arguing from long and quite pertinent experience, they say that it is politically impossible to achieve that goal.

If there is indeed a recession in 1986, I think those political conditions will be changed. More to the point, where, under circumstances of increasing joblessness, is the democratic left going to find a financial margin of maneuver? So in addition to defense cuts, the response to the crisis of this first scenario must include that oft-repeated but never achieved goal: to get the rich off welfare. And this should be done only by abolishing tax expenditures that have no, or a perverse, effect. Where such deductions actually result in investments in wealth-

New Left, New Right, as Long as You Hate Liberals

In my idle moments I sometimes nurse a fantasy—never, I'm sure, to be realized—of charting the later careers of those 1960s New Leftists for whom *Dissent* and its editors were not "radical enough." In some instances, one could suffer muscle strain from having to turn so far to the right. Here, for instance, is Tim Hyde, who in the 1960s was a Maoist, part of "Progressive Labor" at the University of Iowa and now, bless his opportunistic little soul, a deputy director of the National Republican Senatorial Committee.

The *Washington Post*, 1/20/85, had the amusing idea of talking with Hyde about this. It asked him how the Hyde of 1969 would have responded to the Hyde of 1984. The answer is forthright:

> He might have said that Tim Hyde in 1984 had been coopted by the system and had sold out, as have a major portion of his generation.

Well, that's a way of putting it. The *Post* asked, "In your odyssey from student Maoism to comfortable Republican existence, the one thing you've never been was a liberal Democrat." Hyde's answer is classical:

> I used to say in '68 and '69 that I would be more comfortable sitting in a room talking to Ronald Reagan and I would be more likely to *believe* Ronald Reagan—or whoever was the conservative at that time—than Gene McCarthy or George McGovern. At least Ronald Reagan will admit we live in a class society. Liberals have all these fuzzy views. . . .
>
> Liberals *always* seemed to me the bad guys. In the late '60s the liberals were the ones we viewed as trying to sell us out. . . . Today the liberals are wearing the black hats for the obvious reasons that they would like to maintain the status quo—New Deal liberalism.

There's a logic of sorts to Hyde's Law. Reagan knows we live in a class society. Marxists say that too—the difference, apparently, is a trifle: are you with the class below or the class on top? For an enterprising young fellow eager to make it, class above, class below, what does it matter? New Left, New Right, as long as you hate liberals.

— I.H. □

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producing and job-generating assets, they should be increased at a time of crisis.

What has just been said is prelude and precondition. It could create the fiscal and monetary space in which a positive program could go forward. *Which program?*

THE CENTERPIECE, clearly, must be jobs. But we are no longer in 1965 when we could hope that a stimulus would create new openings for the hard-core unemployed in smokestack industries. In a recent projection, the Department of Labor listed the jobs that would grow fastest between 1982 and 1995. They were, in order: building custodians, cashiers, secretaries, office clerks, registered nurses, waiters and waitresses, kindergarten and elementary teachers, truck drivers, nurses' aides and orderlies, technical sales representatives. There were two computer occupations among the top 40—systems analysts and programmers—but even if taken together, they are expected to yield only about 60 percent of the projected increase in building custodians.

These trends have to be rearranged by public policy decisions, since they move in the inegalitarian direction of a society with a technocratic elite, a "sliding" middle, and a new poverty at the bottom. One of the most important ways of doing that is through *the redefinition of the working life*, beginning with the adoption of the 32- (or 30-)hour week. Interestingly, the AFL was in favor of such a move over half a century ago, and the concept was even included in the National Industrial Recovery Act of the "first" New Deal. It is an idea whose time has come again. Perhaps the AFL–CIO could relaunch it next year when it celebrates the 100th anniversary of the AFL's radical call in 1886 for the Eight-Hour Day.

This proposal will present us with, at least, two major problems, and they will have to be confronted. First, as Wassily Leontief has pointed out, if the nation attempted a rapid transition to the 32-hour week through the wage system, economic havoc would result. That is, 32 hours' work for 40 hours' pay would increase the economy's labor cost by 20 percent, reduce profits, cut back on investment, and in general provoke a downward spiral. But, particularly if the tax shift I urged earlier were adopted, we could proceed to this goal by means of, say, 32 hours' work for 33 hours' pay plus tax reductions for working people, which would bring up their after-tax income to the 40 hours' equivalent.

The second problem is that business will try to evade the law precisely because it is designed to create new jobs. If, to take a simplified example, a company has to hire an additional 20 percent of workers in order to bring production up to its old level, that means 20 percent more "fixed" labor costs (payroll taxes, health benefits, and so on). This is one reason why serious thought should be given to abolishing, or reducing, payroll taxes and funding their programs through general revenues, while also moving to a system of national health care. I am perfectly well aware that changes of this magnitude and sweep are difficult to achieve. But I also think that the radical nature of the challenge I have hypothesized requires that they at least be put on the table.

More broadly, discussion of the 32-hour week should focus, not only on the immediate employment-generating effect of the measure, but on the opportunity it affords to redefine the relationship between work and leisure in the United States. However, since this is such a huge subject in its own right, I merely mention its importance here.

The democratic left must be as bold as Newt Gingrich. On the one hand it should, like him, emphasize the necessity for the government to create new industries and jobs, including space—and that these must *not* be given away for the enrichment of the corporations. And, on the other hand, we should take back some of what has already been stolen from the working people. Part of the resonance of the right-wing populists' arguments is to be found in their antibureaucratism (which is often a cover-up for the power of corporate bureaucracies). That theme has been an important aspect of left-wing thought since the '60s (at least), and it is critically important to conceptualize active local participation in the decision process of any industrial policy.

Clearly, I have not tried here to sketch an exhaustive response to the crisis I have imagined. But my central point should be plain: that new departures or, as in the case of tax policy, a return to old verities that now have become radical are in order. In the late '70s the emergent conservative movement focused its theories and practical proposals on the Kemp–Roth tax-reduction bill, much as the liberals articulated their values in the original Humphrey-Hawkins bill. Wouldn't it be worthwhile if, instead of waiting for the recession, the democratic left tried to spell out its approach in concrete legislation?

LET US SUPPOSE that the recession scenario just sketched is the work of an old-fashioned man incapable of realizing that a new age has dawned. Assume that the postindustrial nightmare that I

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described earlier—a society with an increased elite of, say, 25 percent, a depressed but not poverty-stricken middle, and a new poverty—not only comes to pass (which is possible) but turns out to be a viable new paradigm for economic growth (which I do not think possible). *What then?*

At the outset, it is well to recall an interesting relationship: that periods of growth tend to be periods of social protest and innovation. Even in the '30s, mass resistance and organizing did not begin in the trough of the disaster but only after Roosevelt took over and the economy began to revive. In the '60s, many constituencies protested against an Administration that had helped create the semiaffluence without which dissidence was impossible.

Clearly, if there were the kind of long-range recovery I have just posited, an enormous number of people would have cause to mobilize. In such an economy unions would be on the defensive. On the one hand, as *Business Week*'s recent issue on the corporate elite made clear, the high-tech gurus are antilabor, seeing unions as an improper restraint on their free-wheeling style. Since the production jobs in this sector are easily exportable, they would not have too much trouble in imposing their desires on the workers. On the other hand, labor's reserve army among the new poor as well as the technological and international options for substituting robots and/or foreigners for American labor would also militate against the unions.

Blacks and other minorities would be disproportionately represented among the new poor and within the sliding middle. Women in the labor force could find that, rather than seeing female jobs raised to equivalent male levels, the reverse would take place as "women's jobs" were more and more diverted to men. For these three groups—unions, minorities, and women—there would be both a need for defensive struggles and possibilities for organizing. And there would be three interrelated areas where the democratic left might attain a new relevance. First, the issue of social mobility would be prominently on the agenda. Assume that the society was producing a growing GNP. But if the occupational structure of that production were such that fewer and fewer people had the hope of rising within the system, there could be an openness to proposals designed to create new possibilities for mobility. The redefinition of the working life in my first scenario was put forward as a way of sharing jobs during a period of economic crisis. The same demand would apply here, but as a means of creating more upward mobility.

This, however, is an ambiguous and possibly even a bad goal. "Upward mobility" can be translated as rat race, the acceptance of a dog-eat-dog ethic that is antithetical to everything the left stands for. Though it most certainly can be, it is not simply, or always, that. Here, too, there should be an emphasis, not simply on expanding the quantity of available work, but on dealing with its quality. In his fine book *The Economic Illusion*, Robert Kuttner points out that in Sweden homemakers who help the elderly, the severely handicapped, and the mentally ill receive both 160 hours of training and "middle-class" wages. It would be good if in the United States we tried similarly to connect "status" and social contribution, so that the former would not simply be determined by commercial values.

This point touches upon a second area: the problems of youth. One of the most important developments of the postwar period was the growth of mass higher education. In recent years, it is well known, this has led to "credentialing"—an increase in the training of people unrelated to the work they perform and a consequent downward displacement of the less educated who once held those jobs. At the same time, many students are adopting career strategies (becoming, for instance, lawyers) that have nothing to do with their inclinations or talents but are simply tactics for beating the system by joining it. Here, too, the redefinition of the working life has a significant potential.

Finally, the experience of the women's movement would become important for men if, as might be the case, there is a "feminization" of the occupational structure, where "macho" smokestack work is replaced by "women's" service employment. As of now, comparable worth is a demand addressing the sexism inherent in the job structure. This concept contains, however, the core of a larger notion: that work pay and status should be determined on some kind of rational basis and be open to bargaining. Today the pay men receive is not necessarily an index of what it should be according to the worth of their work, and it still often is a significant measure of discrimination against women. But if there is a certain reversal, and more and more men now are reduced to a "female" occupational status, isn't there a basis for a united movement that could challenge the job structure itself, on both male and female grounds?

When I spoke at strike rallies at Yale last year, I found that one of the most important developments there was the unity between the clerical strikers and the male-dominated blue-collar local, which respected the clericals' picket lines. Indeed, the women and the men needed one another and helped each other to a victory.

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In this second scenario, as in the first, I have only suggested the broad directions of a left response to unprecedented change. The ideas are briefly outlined and sketchy—merely a beginning. The basic point is the one with which I began: a recession will not "save" us and a recovery will not "bury" us. Each would pose new problems that we have never encountered before. Each would open up new opportunities in the struggle to democratize, decentralize, and humanize the economy. Unsocial socialization is still the basic problem, even if in ways never dreamed of by Karl Marx. Democratic and social socialization is still the answer, even if in forms yet to be invented. □

3. Dennis Wrong

The End of Ideology?

Reagan's reelection by a landslide fully conformed to the well-established precedent that incumbent presidents win new terms when relative peace abroad and prosperity at home prevail. Of 13 incumbents before him who ran for election in this century, only four were defeated. That two of the latter were Reagan's immediate predecessors perhaps accounts for the spurious air of uncertainty created even by interpreters of American politics who should have known better. Carter in 1980 had faced a unique combination of inflation at home and humiliation abroad (the Iranian hostage crisis) that was enough to defeat him, even if this was not quite comparable to the challenge from a popular former president of his own party confronting Taft in 1912 or to the Great Depression that doomed Hoover in 1932. As for Gerald Ford, he was the only president who had never previously been elected even to the vice-presidency, a by-product of the scandals of the Nixon administration that also largely accounted for Ford's defeat.

There is therefore little point in reading much ideological significance into the 1984 election results. They are consistent, however, with a number of long-run trends that are distinctly unfavorable to the future electoral prospects of the liberalism so long dominant in the Democratic party. People on the left have not been realistic in facing up to the reality of these trends. There was never good reason to believe that the overadvertised "gender gap," or registration campaigns among blacks and the poor, or fears of nuclear war aroused by the anti-Soviet rhetoric of the Reagan administration during its early years in office would make much difference.

Liberals have sought to find solace in Democratic Senate gains and retention of control in the House. Yet congressional Democrats benefited from incumbency just as Reagan did. In 1956 and 1972, when Republican presidents also won second terms by landslides, the Democrats actually lost fewer seats in Congress than they had lost when losing the presidency by smaller margins four years earlier. The repetition of this pattern in 1984 strongly suggests that when presidents are reelected, the advantages of incumbency also help congressional office-holders regardless of party or ideology. The turnover of seats in Congress has steadily declined in recent decades. Significantly, the Republicans last year won most of the congressional and gubernatorial contests in which there was no incumbent. This, rather than the strong Democratic showing in the face of Reagan's landslide, may be the real harbinger of the future.

There has been much talk in recent years about party "realignment." If realignment means that the weaker of the two parties suddenly becomes the stronger for some time to come by decisively winning a crucial election at all levels of government, as the Democrats did in 1932, then obviously this hasn't happened since then. However, in this as in other areas, our expectations have been deformed by the sudden, apocalyptic transformations that

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marked the first half of the century. One can discern a slow but definite trend toward the establishment, or restoration, of the Republican party as the dominant or "governing" party, at least at the presidential level. The Republicans have won two-thirds of the presidential elections since 1952 and all but once by comfortable margins. The exception is apparent rather than real because most of George Wallace's votes in 1968 would have gone to Nixon. Two of the three Democratic victories in the same period were very close. The big test for the Republicans will come in 1988, as it would have in 1976 had it not been for Watergate.

The Republicans have been acting like a normal governing party since Reagan's reelection. The right-wing tub-thumpers, so in evidence at the Dallas convention last August, have scarcely been visible. The personnel changes, both within the Administration and in the Senate leadership, have given little comfort or even recognition to the party's hard-line ideologues. More important, the Administration has preempted a major Democratic issue in proposing tax reforms that are far from favorable to the interests of business or the higher income groups. One remembers Nixon's failed welfare program (FAP) and his Administration's successful promotion of legislation protecting the environment (EPA), setting health and safety standards (OSHA), and providing training for displaced workers (CETA). The moves by the Reagan administration are even more significant because Reagan came from the party's militantly antigovernment right wing. A party that sees itself as the "natural" party of government is disposed to set aside its ideological prejudices and class loyalties in order to deal practically, which is to say politically, with real problems demanding new policy initiatives. In foreign policy, the reopening of arms-control negotiations with the Russians is also a "pragmatic" move likely to win credit with the American public.

It is virtually a definition of a major or governing party to note that domestic and foreign issues are articulated and fought out within its ranks rather than in impassioned ideological confrontations with its electoral rival. The disappointed Republican right may storm back in full force in the next four years and precipitate bitter divisions within the party. Indeed, the Democrats' best chances for 1988 may lie in a Republican split, or in the victory of the party's most rigid, *revanchiste* "conservatives." But if so, this is further evidence of how low the Democrats have fallen when their prospects depend on what happens within the Republican party. It used to be the other way around!

It has become a cliché to attribute the Democratic decline to the dissolution of the "New Deal coalition." But the full implications of this are faced less often, least of all by liberals or people of the left. They are inclined to reassure themselves that at least the "core" members of the old coalition—Jews, blacks, and trade unionists—remained loyal to it in 1984. Yet none of these groups, not even labor, was central to the original New Deal coalition formed in the 1930s. The Jews have never been numerous enough, most blacks were still in the South and disenfranchised until the 1960s, and labor's strength peaked in the 1940s. The plight of the Democratic party today is most apparent when we consider what has happened to the groups that were crucial to the old coalition.

Agrarian protest and radical agitation, chiefly involving small farmers, were more important than labor militancy in the early years of the Depression and the New Deal. As late as 1948, the Farm Belt gave Truman the election by shifting to him late in the presidential campaign. But the decline of the farm population means that there just aren't enough farmers left vitally to affect election outcomes.

Old people wanting pensions, some of them mobilized by the Townsend movement, were another powerful voice to which the New Deal was a response. Today neither party dares to tamper very much with Social Security or Medicare. In the United States as elsewhere, old people have been the welfare state's major and most secure beneficiaries.

Last and far from least is the white South. There one can speak of realignment as having already partially taken place. The disappearance of the old Democratic "Solid South" always carried with it the likelihood that the Republicans would eventually emerge as the majority party in the region. The only two presidents the Democrats have clearly elected since 1952 were Southerners (I don't count Kennedy because his 1960 margin was so infinitesimal). Conversely, the most overwhelming Democratic defeats have come when there was no Southerner on the ticket, as in 1972, 1984, and 1968 if one totals the anti-Democratic vote. At present, the Republicans hold just under half of the South's Senate seats and about a quarter of its House seats, a situation that is bound to change to their advantage as party competition spreads to the local level.

The old one-party Democratic monopoly was based on the maintenance of the racial segregation that was overthrown by federal reforms in the 1960s. But the racially liberalized South remains the most morally traditionalist, religiously funda-

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mentalist, militarist, and in foreign policy interventionist region. Its Republican leanings are rooted in its conservatism and not merely a response to the monolithic allegiance of blacks to the Democratic party. Not only is the movement toward a two-party South favoring the Republicans still far from complete, but economic and population growth is increasing the South's political and electoral weight in the nation, reversing the trend of the years when the Solid South swelled national Democratic majorities.

ELECTORAL DEMOGRAPHY AND GEOGRAPHY are obviously not the whole story and liberals may find comfort in the idea, still upheld by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., that our politics are subject to the cyclical alternation of periods of reforming activism and conservative retrenchment. If we follow the general practice of periodizing by decades, this century displays a strikingly regular pattern in which decades of protest and liberal-radical ferment were succeeded by transitional decades (often marked by foreign wars), followed by conservative decades, after which the whole cycle began again. If this sequence should hold, we may expect another turn to the left in the 1990s in the aftermath of the conservative 1980s, which were preceded by the transitional 1970s after the radical 1960s.

Too pat to be altogether convincing, surely. The persistence of the cyclical rhythm is not self-explanatory and any explanation must presuppose some underlying conditions that have remained constant, as I have argued in *Dissent* before. What if the underlying conditions have been eroded by the recurrent workings of the cycle, reducing the probability of its future recurrence, a possibility I suggested in the Fall 1981 *Dissent* after Reagan's first election? Left or reformist initiatives in the past have come from the activation and entry into politics of new, previously passive, disadvantaged groups: farmers, industrial workers, urban immigrants, blacks, women. After achieving their minimum objectives through the responsiveness of the party system such groups, often calling themselves "movements," lose their forward momentum, sometimes as a result of arousing resistance in the form of traditionalist countermovements. The Right to Life movement and the Moral Majority are recent cases in point, and their fervent support for Reagan in 1980 contributed a good deal to the militantly conservative, not to say reactionary, tone of his first Administration.

It is hard to discern any new groups that are substantial enough in size or sufficiently homogeneous in political outlook, even potentially, to be capable of sparking a turn to the left or a revival of liberalism in the near future. Of course, no one foresaw the emergence of most of the groups that have played such a role in the past—history rarely fails to surprise us. But there is no reason to assume that American society will always produce new blocs of discontented voters mobilized to support political demands that keep alive a spirit of egalitarian protest from the left.

Many liberals and leftists have looked hopefully to the enormous population of nonvoters consisting disproportionately of minority and low-income groups who represent potential Democratic voters. (A few have even conjured up visions of the mobilization of nonvoters by a new socialist party or a thoroughly revamped Democratic party, realizing at last the left's ancient dream of a restructuring of the American party system along class lines that would give the left party inherent demographic advantages.) The assumption is that nonvoting reflects a political apathy or alienation that would be dispelled if the electorate were offered a "real alternative"—a forthright egalitarian, anticapitalist program. This view is the mirror image of the old claim of right-wing Republicans who used to argue that if only the voters were given "a choice and not an echo," they would flock to the polls to reject the liberals' collectivist blandishments.

The trouble is that there are just too many nonvoters—amounting to over 40 percent of the electorate. Surveys have long shown that nonvoters divide politically in much the same way as voters; they tend, however, to be less liberal on the average than the typical Democrat and less conservative than the typical Republican. Their varied socioeconomic composition, even if weighted toward the Democratic-voting lower classes, ensures that they include many potential Republican voters, as the Republicans seemed well aware in 1984 when organizing rather more effective registration drives than the Democrats.

Most discussions of the declining electoral turnout since the early 1960s, a trend checked rather than reversed in 1982 and 1984, fail to take into account the lowering of the voting age to 18 in 1970. Nonvoting is much higher among those who are 18 to 21 years old, an age group that also disproportionately favored Reagan in 1984. There are certainly no signs on the horizon of an imminent youth or generational revolt like that of the 1960s.

One new group with an apparently distinctive political-cultural profile is the large baby-boom cohort of highly educated professionals, the

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Yuppies. They produced one of the few real surprises of the 1984 campaign in the support they gave to Gary Hart in the Democratic primaries. Their influence in both parties is likely to be considerable for some years to come. The best hope for a renovation of the Democrats' fortunes may lie in winning strong support from this constituency: there are solid grounds for thinking that even in 1984 Hart would have improved upon Mondale's performance had he been the candidate. The "neoliberalism" of this group is heavily represented among younger Democratic politicians, both in Congress and in the statehouses. In policy terms, the neoliberals address themselves directly and forthrightly to the economy's new structural problems to which the welfare-state liberalism of old-line Democrats no longer seems relevant. But as the Mondale-Hart contest revealed, there are tensions between the neoliberals and such traditional Democratic interest groups as the unions and the blacks; in precincts further to the left, the neoliberals arouse suspicion because of their frequent preference for market incentives over statutory regulation, for businessmen over bureaucrats, and because of their general failure to adopt the proper adversary attitude toward "capitalism" itself.

None of these developments means that the Democrats won't win any elections in the near future. Even if there is a cessation or slowing up of the alternating left/right rhythm in our politics, genuine two-party democracy ensures the occasional victory of the opposition party, whether it is more liberal or more conservative than its usually dominant rival. The recession presently anticipated may very well result in Democratic gains in 1986, including possibly winning control of the Senate, and even the capture of the presidency in 1988. But short of a cataclysmic economic disaster comparable to 1929-32, such Democratic victories are unlikely to initiate a new political era or do more than slow up, especially in Congress, the present trend favoring the Republicans.

There is also the risk that success might accentuate Democratic splits dividing the new neoliberals, the survivors of the New Deal coalition, and the waning movements of the 1960s. Arthur Schlesinger's complaint that Jimmy Carter was the most conservative Democratic president since Grover Cleveland may have drawn, unwittingly, the profile of Democratic presidents in eras of Republican ascendancy—such as that in which Cleveland was twice elected to the White House a century ago.

IT HAS BEEN a standard liberal charge that the Reagan administration aims to "dismantle the welfare state." The Administration doubtless contains free-marketeers who would like to do so, as did the Eisenhower administration, whose addiction to impassioned free-enterprise and antistatist rhetoric, at least in its early years, seems to be forgotten. Perhaps liberals took it less seriously, although that was not apparent at the time, because Eisenhower had defeated the bitter anti-New Dealers in his party whereas Reagan came from their ranks and thus is seen as an "ideologue" rather than a "pragmatist" like other recent Republican presidents. But the continuing popularity of the major federal social programs has ruled out any serious effort to eliminate them.

Government transfer payments have, moreover, played the role of Keynesian "built-in stabilizers" they were expected to play, limiting the effects of the recent severe recession and of persistent unemployment caused by changes in technology and international trade. Despite Reagan's antigovernment rhetoric, the public has clearly taken him at his word in his promise not to touch the "safety net" provided by the New Deal and supplemented by the reforms of the Johnson administration.

Reagan's electoral victories strongly suggest that extension of the welfare state, associated primarily with the orientation of the Democratic party, has lost political appeal. Past inflation and fear of its recurrence, declining economic growth, doubts about the effectiveness of some antipoverty programs, dislike of the higher taxes required to support greater welfare expenditures, and objections to the bureaucratic centralization and standardization their administration requires, all have contributed to reduced enthusiasm for new ventures and to acceptance of the Reagan administration's cuts in existing programs.

Nor, should economic adversity return the Democrats to power in the late 1980s, is it likely that increases in entitlements, expensive new programs aiding the poor, or redistributive policies in general will be the order of the day, as they briefly appeared to be in the early 1960s. A more decisive and longer-range consideration may be that the very successes of the welfare state in ensuring minimum levels of economic security and restraining deflation in times of recession has induced many people to resent state-imposed limits on the discretionary spending of their incomes.

Under such circumstances recent liberal appeals to "compassion" have proved ineffectual. As Gus Tyler observed in the *New Leader*, "In general, Americans resist the idea that elections are an eleemosynary exercise." Tyler pointed out that movements and parties of the left have in the past

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nearly always made their most fundamental appeals to the voters' self-interest rather than to their charitable impulses. At what income level, one wonders, ought people to be moved by compassion for those below them? Are there sizable segments of the population that are not poor enough to be fit objects for compassion yet not rich enough to be expected to feel compassionate toward those poorer than themselves? Aid to the poor is obviously a fundamental and deeply moral responsibility of government, but to make it the centerpiece of a political program, as liberals and even some Democratic politicians have often seemed to do in recent years, is a doubtful strategy. As Tyler shrewdly observes of the 1984 campaign, "To employed and reasonably well-satisfied voters, Mondale's message seemed to be 'I will hike your taxes to take care of *those* poor.' "

The claim that since the late 1930s a "liberal-labor coalition" has been the foundation of the Democratic party is only a slight exaggeration. If, by the Eisenhower years, the unions had become less militant, less radical, and more inclined to "interest-group" liberalism, they continued to provide a bedrock of mass support from which any rebuilding of Democratic liberalism necessarily had to begin. Today the decline of the unions by just about every conceivable index means that this is no longer the case. Nor are our economic difficulties, intermittent since the middle 1970s, likely to encourage a revival of labor militancy as an appropriate or even relevant response to them.

The level of unemployment remains a crucial political issue and a rise in that level, already higher than in previous postrecession periods since the war, will spell trouble for the Republicans. But technological change not the business cycle, the survival of jobs not the wages and working conditions attached to them, foreign competition and saturated demand, not underconsumption, have weakened the unions to a point from which they are unlikely fully to recover in view of the changed composition of the labor force. Like the welfare state, the unions have been victims of their own success, for they have made a major contribution to our high-wage, high-consumption economy, which represent now that we have all become Keynesians a permanent achievement no longer perceived as requiring strong unions to maintain it.

New forms of occupational organization and representation may emerge in our postindustrial society, but they are likely to differ as much as they resemble the labor movement created by the blue-collar working class over the past century and a half. "The facts, though unpalatable, are undeniable. The world has changed, and with it the economic culture, based on mass-production factories, in which the unions thrived." This was said not by an ardent hi-tech enthusiast of neoconservative or neoliberal inclination, but by Roy Hattersley, the deputy leader of the British Labour party. His statement serves to recall that the decline of labor and the left has not been limited to the United States. Much left-liberal keening over the iniquities and vulgarities of the Reagan administration has tended to overlook this, failing to remark that "Reaganism," for all its flag-waving at the level of campaigning, is far from being a peculiarly American manifestation, but is consistent with political and economic trends at work in other major Western democracies with advanced industrial mixed economies. According to the *New York Times* series in which I came upon the quotation from Hattersley, trade unions are suffering declines in membership, inability to win wage increases and even to resist wage cuts, and general loss of both economic and political power in all European industrial countries, including even Sweden, with the single exception of West Germany.

Unemployment, the decline of smokestack industries, wage cutbacks, and reductions in welfare-state benefits have been just about universal. Politically, right-wing parties or coalitions have since 1980 won elections in Britain, West Germany, Norway, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands and, most recently, Canada. The major exception, of course, is France. But the Mitterrand government looks like a loser in the forthcoming election, and its function recently seems to have been to render more palatable some policies of austerity that might have been bitterly fought by the left, had they been imposed by a right-wing government.

One may conclude that the "end of ideology," prematurely proclaimed in the late 1950s, is upon us and this time is real. The original authors of that phrase did not intend it to refer only to left ideologies, as was often charged by their critics on the left, for they also had in mind the defeat of fascism in the Second World War and the more recent discrediting of McCarthyism. Fascism remains a dead tendency of *entre les deux guerres*, nor has there been any revival of the indiscriminate anti-Communist mud-slinging made famous by Senator McCarthy. But, ironically, what the "end of ideology" writers were mistakenly accused of conjecturing 25 years ago now appears to be coming to pass.

The causes of the weakening of liberalism and the left differ, however, from those suggested at that time. Economic strains and the risk of a

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decline in living standards confront us today rather than the stable growth that was so powerful a solvent of political and economic conflict in the early postwar period. Ever since the first oil crisis in 1973, Marxist voices have predictably been raised in excited announcements that the "crisis of capitalism" is once more at hand. But in the 1980s the crisis of the left, of both the moderate and the radical left, seems far more acute with the end of consensus on the welfare state, trade unions, and government management of the economy by Keynesian methods.

The present situation is obviously a good deal more complicated than implied by either the consensual assumptions of the old "end of ideology" writers or leftists' wishful anticipation of transforming conflicts. To a degree, as I have indicated, general acceptance of the continuation of high wages, minimum welfare entitlements, and government responsibility for the economy has itself helped undermine trade unions and parties of the left at a time when labor militancy and redistributive social policies seem quite irrelevant to the international structural dislocations the advanced industrial economies are experiencing, essentially a crisis of production rather than distribution. "Socialism" provides no credible solution to these dislocations, which has helped to undermine still further its fading attractiveness as an ideal.

The proposals put forward by the neoliberals in the Democratic party might reverse that party's fortunes, especially if the Republicans turn out to be too inhibited by their traditional antigovernment outlook or too bound to the golden parachutists of the business world to take forceful measures to deal with the economic troubles ahead. For whatever its recent skepticism about the enlargement of some government activities, the American electorate continues to hold the government primarily responsible for the fate of the economy. There has been no return to pre-1930s attitudes in this respect, any more than to isolationism or even noninterventionism in foreign policy, as those on the left who overestimated the historical importance of Vietnam have been forced to realize.

The Republicans may not oblige by letting the Democrats steal the march on them in initiating new economic policies. And any new proposals the Democratic neoliberals advance are likely to be denigrated as movements to the center or the right by conventional left-liberals. But perhaps the left/right distinction itself is becoming obsolete as a way of understanding politics and political possibility. Based on a spatial metaphor, space itself, let us remember, is not that one-dimensional: it includes up and down, before and behind, round and about, near and far. Why should politics be a more simple, linear realm? □

Thomas B. Edsall

Politics and the Power of Money

For the future of the Democratic party, the 18-percentage-point defeat of Walter F. Mondale in the last election was far less important than the decisive failure of the party's basic strategy: voter mobilization. Both the Mondale campaign and the Democratic National Committee calculated that in 1984 the party had the potential to register and turn out sharply increased numbers of blacks, Hispanics, and women to reverse a 20-year decline in the rate of voter participation in presidential elections, and to produce a record-setting 100 million voters.

The strategy proved to be a dismal failure. Turnout grew from 86.5 million in 1980 to 92.7 million last year, just a 0.7 percent increase when population growth is accounted for. More important, most of this modest growth appears, from all the evidence available, to have been among individuals who voted for Republican candidates. Participation by blacks and women actually fell by a

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percentage point each, according to ABC exit polls, for blacks from 9 to 8 percent, and for women from 50 to 49 percent of the electorate. Hispanic voting grew, from 5 to 7 percent of the electorate but, at the same time, Democratic strength in presidential voting among Hispanics declined, from an 18-percentage-point advantage in 1980 to a 12-point advantage in 1984, more than canceling out for the Democratic party the gain in turnout.

Instead of bringing to the polls more blacks and women, major increases in voter participation did emerge among two very different groups: white, fundamentalist Christians and military personnel. The importance of the growing strength of the "Bible-believing" vote extended far beyond the presidential election.

In House contests, Republicans have gained 16 seats, and eight of these seats in two states, North Carolina and Texas, both of which have been key targets of the religious-political movement that are coordinated by an umbrella organization called the American Coalition for Traditional Values (ACTV).

These trends clearly point to the continuing difficulty of the Democratic party in finding new sources of electoral strength to replenish the decaying New Deal coalition. The last major movement of voters to the party occurred ten years ago, based on the ultimately ephemeral public reaction to Watergate. In contrast, the Republican party appears to have made solid gains among conservative, white Christian voters, although this expansion of the GOP voting base carries with it significant liabilities, reflected in part by the resurgence of Democratic voting among Jews, and the potential threat of alienating from the GOP younger voters who do not share conservative Christian social values.

The intraparty conflict inherent in the expansion of the GOP voting base points to what is likely to become the most important source of tension for the Republican party in the near future. While GOP strength is growing, the party faces a delicate balancing process similar to that within the old Democratic coalition between Northern liberals and Southern conservatives, as the party attempts to keep a firm grasp on the conservative Christian vote as well as to capitalize on significant new shifts toward the GOP among the young and Hispanics. At a different level, a deeper source of tension within the Republican party will develop between the small minority holding large amounts of wealth, and the far larger groups targeted by Republican strategists: blue-collar workers, Southerners, and students.

1984 VOTING PATTERNS point toward a highly significant change in the relationship between political parties, the partisan allegiance of the electorate, and voter manipulation. While there is considerable evidence right now of a partisan shift to the GOP among the electorate, a similar shift emerged in polls taken in late 1980 through much of 1981, only to quickly disappear in the recession of 1982. Instead, the far more sustained trend has been a consistent move away from partisan allegiance among voters on both sides of the aisle. In one of the most interesting analyses of polling data, Martin P. Wattenberg, professor of political science at the University of California, Irvine, finds in *The Decline of American Political Parties* that the percentage of the electorate that can be defined as unquestionably partisan—having positive feelings toward one party and negative feelings toward the other—has nearly halved from 1952 to 1980, falling from 50.1 percent to 27.3 percent. At the same time, the percentage of voters who perceive both parties in basically bland, neutral (nonpartisan) terms has nearly tripled, from 13 percent in 1952 to 36.5 percent in 1980.

On the surface, these figures suggest that parties are becoming increasingly irrelevant; in fact, the opposite is true. In an increasingly de-aligned electorate, candidates of both parties have lost the ability to depend on binding partisan loyalty for a substantial core of support going into elections. Facing a much more malleable electorate, the critical factors in politics become a party's ability to raise money in order to use the media to set the terms of political debate and finance complex, computer-organized voter mobilization strategies.

In fact, the importance of the techniques of voter manipulation, primarily through television, intensifies in an electorate without commitment to political party. And it is in the application of such techniques that the Republican party has in recent years moved far ahead of the Democratic party, not only at the presidential level but increasingly in contests for every partisan office. The steady diminution of the core of guaranteed Democratic and Republican voters—the emergence of a fluid electorate—places increased stress on campaign technology. Fund-raising, polling, computerization of both demographic information and precinct voting histories, direct mail, the precise application of all relevant information to television commercials, issue selection, and more targeted mailings have become the terrain on which campaigns can be won or lost.

Money and technology do not predetermine the outcome of elections, but they are major forces in

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determining a candidate's or a party's ability to fully capitalize on advantages and to defuse liabilities. In the last election, the Reagan–Bush '84 Committee and the Republican National Committee (RNC) together put at least $10 million into a highly sophisticated voter-registration campaign. First, computerized lists of all registered voters in 28 "battleground" states were purchased and, in localities where lists were not computerized, GOP personnel keypunched the names. These lists were then run against commercial lists of all residents with telephones and, when registered voters were "purged," the remaining names (and phone numbers and addresses) provided a basic list of unregistered voters. Using varying strategies, these names were then run against precinct lists showing areas of high GOP support, or against lists showing the value of homes and income levels by census tract. In the case of registration targeted toward Hispanics, these lists were run first against Hispanic surname files available from the census, and then against lists of households with two cars, or those subscribing to the *Wall Street Journal*, in an effort to find affluent unregistered Hispanics.

What had begun as a defensive strategy designed by the GOP to take the edge off an expected massive Democratic registration drive became, in effect, an offensive strategy, matching, if not exceeding, Democratic efforts. The Democrats, in the meantime, depended almost entirely on supposedly "nonpartisan," third-party voter registration drives by civil rights, peace, and community organizations. These efforts were severely hampered by (1) requirements of nonpartisanship, (2) intense competition for grants from foundations, leading to inflated claims of success, (3) the inability to follow through on registration to make sure that the newly eligible actually got to the polls, and (4) racial conflicts growing out of the fact that such black groups as the NAACP did not obtain until late in the game an obscure tax status many of the grant-giving foundations considered essential before handing out cash. In effect, while the GOP ran a centrally directed program in which each state effort was ultimately held responsible to the RNC and to the Reagan–Bush campaign, the Democratic effort involved a disparate collection of organizations, none of which had any structural fealty to the Democratic party.

The success of the GOP in voter registration reflects only one element of a substantial Republican advantage in the technology of politics. This advantage is, ultimately, based on money. The Republican party apparatus has, over the past ten years, demonstrated an extraordinary ability to develop a base of contributors, large and small, adequate to produce in excess of $200 million for the RNC, the Republican Senatorial and Republican Congressional Campaign committees, money that is separate and apart from the money raised by the candidates themselves.

The Democrats, whose *candidates* have been able to raise as much as their Republican opponents, have not, as a *party*, been able to approach the GOP success. In the last election the Democratic party made modest gains in terms of fundraising, enough to finance a new headquarters and purchase a media production facility, but its receipts remain one-fourth of those taken in by the GOP. More significantly, the centrifugal forces within the Democratic party are much stronger than those within the Republican party. While Democrats like to complain that the GOP raises more money because it is the party of the fat cats, the complaint is not entirely justified. In fact, the Republican party has, for many conservative donors, become the vehicle for ideological and political expression. In contrast, much of the Democratic donor base remains more loyal to such issue and reform groups as Common Cause, the Sierra

What Harold Rosenberg Foresaw

The United States today is governed by professional illusionists. Not only are officials elected through campaigns of image-building based on fiction and caricature, but once in office their actions are decided not by anticipating consequences to the nation and/or humanity but by the kind of image those actions will enable them to present to the public. Washington acts by putting on an act. The same is true of every state capitol and city hall. With sheriffs behaving like movie actors, movie actors aspire to the highest offices.

Politics increasingly takes on the forms of mass culture, in which the picture of a thing, or the publicity about it, achieves precedence over the thing itself, since the latter is seen by considerably fewer people. . . . Events are contrived out of the whole cloth in order to provide occasions for actions or statements of policy. Events are made to happen for the sake of words, instead of words being used to give an account of events. History has been turned inside out; writing it takes place in advance of its occurrence, and every statesman is an author in embryo.

—From an article on "What's Happening in America," written during the Johnson Administration in Partisan Review. □

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Club, and the National Organization of Women than to the party.

FOR THE MOMENT, it is difficult to see how, in the immediate future, the Democratic party can gain centrality among all the organizations from labor to environmentalist that now form its core of support. The Republican party achieved this kind of leverage over its constituent organizations at a moment of crisis for the GOP in the mid-1970s, when Watergate threatened the party's survival.

For the Democrats, there is no such action-provoking threat; instead, the Democratic party is suffering from the kind of slow erosion of which the 1984 voter-turnout statistics are only one symptom. This erosion is particularly difficult for the party to stem when most of its incumbent members, particularly those in the House of Representatives, are confronting neither the threat of defeat nor the loss of majority control in the near future, permitting key leaders to retain a sense of false comfort in the face of a postponed danger. □

Barry Rehfeld

Whistle-Blowing & Pentagon Fat

The nation's military might is never more impressive than when the Pentagon is battling against those who criticize its efforts to rid the defense budget of waste, fraud, and inefficiency. Though the budget is widely conceded to be riddled with fat, the Pentagon has always succeeded in defusing the issue by attacking the bearer of bad news, not the news itself.

Defense employees bent on blowing the whistle on abuses run up against stone walls of superiors, are intimidated, transferred, or even fired. Those who persist often find a Congress, and most newspapers, with little stomach for working through mazes of bureaucracy and highly technical weapons-system data to support the struggle of one lone voice, while a highly organized Defense Department public-affairs mill issues reams of rebuttal grist under the rubric of "national security." Thus a limited amount of news gets out and less is done about it. Yet rising defense expenditures have brought a corresponding increase in the amount of money being thrown away. As a result, now the sound of whistles is more frequently heard above the Pentagon din. But to what end?

WITNESS THE CASE of A. Ernest Fitzgerald. The Air Force's chief civilian cost analyst—who blew the whistle on the C–5A cargo plane's cost overruns of $2 billion in 1968 and was later fired for his honesty—returned to ferreting out waste, fraud, and inefficiency in military procurements in the spring of 1982 after winning a 13-year court battle.

Yet if anything, the challenges were even greater when he got back than when he had left. Weapons expenditures were fast on their way to taking the biggest chunk out of the defense budget—ahead of such items as operations and maintenance, personnel, research and development. With the stakes so high, defense contractors and military program managers—who often work for contractors when their military careers are over—were more reluctant than ever to turn a critical eye on their booming livelihood, even though Pentagon-watchers across the political spectrum have produced estimates that as much as half of the military procurement budget ($99.5 billion for fiscal 1985, of which the Air Force will get $42.0 billion) could be saved through cost-cutting measures.

Fitzgerald has met resistance even within his own department. The court decided that the Air Force, represented by Secretary Verne Orr, acted in "bad faith" in its grudging settlement with Fitzgerald and would have to be monitored to see if he was being permitted to perform his job. Fitzger-

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ald's specialty is getting the most work for the fewest dollars out of contractors. Yet in nearly three years he has been unable to make necessary improvements. The Pentagon has effectively stymied him in the two programs he latched onto as soon as he returned.

In the first case, the military program manager for Hughes Aircraft's Maverick missile asked him to review the company's financial needs for the missile program at the Air Force's Tucson, Arizona, facilities where the Maverick was being built. The military's most troubled project was already running up staggering costs, rising from a contracted $140,000 to nearly $4 million for each of 97 missiles. At the center of Fat City, Fitzgerald found out that Hughes was charging $3,407 for an hour's work that should have cost between $20 and $35; employees were working at between 6 percent and 50 percent of capacity, and supervisors were filling out time cards in advance. Controls on time cards were so lax that others have reported that the fraudulent practice of charging work done on other Hughes contracts to Maverick accounts was commonplace.

Labor rates were also the heart of spare-parts production abuses at United Technologies' Pratt & Whitney facilities in East Hartford, Connecticut, revealed a couple of months later. A report by Air Force civilian contract negotiator Robert Hancock reported that P&W's repricing policy on spare parts had cost the government $140 million, and that was only the "tip of the iceberg." The Air Force claimed that the new prices were largely accurate and that many of the huge increases could be attributed to clerical error in the original pricing. Its pronouncement on the subject was all the public got to digest, even though Fitzgerald had performed a follow-up study confirming all of Hancock's findings and documenting that behind the huge increases in spare parts costs were not clerical errors but labor costs 20 times P&W's own rates, ranging between $150 and $300 for an hour's work. The follow-up report also revealed that the government had no idea what it would be paying for the parts when it ordered them and accepted claims by P&W that prices had to be increased four times to reflect higher costs. On top of the final figure was tacked a 15 percent profit—par for a military cost-plus contract.

WHILE HORROR STORIES about spare-parts pricing became something of a media sensation last year, little attention was paid to the abusive underlying costs Fitzgerald and others uncovered. Orr has regularly supported (or was it lip service?) and attended to Fitzgerald's findings, but he has always backed off or not followed through in the face of opposition. (Fitzgerald has been told by Orr's staff that "we have to save him from himself.")

In a highly suspicious set of moves within 24 hours of each other in March of 1983, the public relations machinery of both P&W and the Air Force issued statements reaffirming that P&W had done nothing wrong. Fitzgerald publicly denied that this was the Air Force's position and emerged from a meeting with Orr convinced that Orr supported him. Since then, though, nothing has been done to recover P&W's windfall profits from spare parts. The Hughes issue followed the same course. Orr came down hard on the Maverick overcharges, but rather than take action against the company sided with those in his office who wanted to deflect the issue by first investigating other contractors' labor practices before taking any corrective measures. The result? It took nearly two years for the data to trickle in, and some generals managing programs blatantly refused to cooperate.

When a report was finally completed last fall, the Air Force tried to restrict its release by marking it "for official use only," but Fitzgerald was called to testify before a congressional subcommittee and the results were soon made public. The Air Force's desire for secrecy was then made obvious. The evidence gathered at P&W and five other defense contractors—General Dynamics, General Electric, Rockwell International, Lockheed, and Boeing—clearly demonstrated that P&W was not the only company overcharging the government. The facts showed, as Fitzgerald knew they would, that there were widespread abuses. Rockwell, for example, was billing the government more than 13 times the standard labor rates. Yet still, virtually nothing has been done about the abuses at Rockwell or any of the other contractors. At the heart of this stagnation is more of the imaginative foot-dragging and stonewalling of Orr & Co.

Fitzgerald could haul "Bad Faith" Orr back into court, but this would delight the military even more than if he did nothing. Further court wrangling would distract Fitzgerald from his work. His only alternative is to keep digging and speak out whenever he can—if he can. He has not always been as successful in presenting his views publicly as he was with the report on the contractors. The day before he was to speak before another congressional subcommittee last year, Assistant Air Force Secretary Richard Harshman prevented him from appearing as a representative of the Air Force. The only way he could get his findings aired, without losing his job again, was to slip his written testi-

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mony into the congressional record. Others, though, have had no alternative routes.

THE MOST CONSPICUOUS VICTIM pushed off the Pentagon payroll was George Spanton, an auditor for the Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA), who was coerced into early retirement in December 1983 by his superiors after exposing padded executive salaries at P&W's West Palm Beach, Florida facilities. DCAA Director Charles O. Starrett, Jr. was hit with a rare counterpunch when the Merit Protection Board accused him last year of having harassed Spanton—a violation of the Civil Service Reform Act. The charge, though, was an isolated blow. The case was struck down by one federal judge and is now mired in the government appeals process. And, once again, no one has laid a glove on the contract abuses.

Spanton's one-man battle may be considered a triumph when compared to the record of Congress. For instance, a law requiring that a laboratory be established to test parts independently, trumpeted in the fall of 1983, is *still* without a director.

Thus whistle-blowing or simply "telling the truth," as Fitzgerald prefers to call it, may be the most dependable game around. Yet keeping military waste, fraud, and inefficiency in the public eye (that is, *j'accuse*) may produce only a Pyrrhic victory. The most funds Fitzgerald has gotten the Pentagon to spend wisely was when he embarrassed Orr in 1983 into awarding Robert Hancock $10,000 for his good work. □

Joseph Clark

Labor Remains in Politics

Interviews with Lane Kirkland and other AFL–CIO Leaders

Whether or not the idea ever had any validity, no one could argue plausibly after November 6 that labor is the leader or vanguard of the people. But this much can be said: AFL–CIO members gave the Mondale–Ferraro ticket a bigger slice of their vote than the whole electorate gave Ronald Reagan in his sweeping victory. A national poll of AFL–CIO members showed 61 percent for Mondale, 39 percent for Reagan. This may come as a surprise to many who heard accounts after the election suggesting that organized labor had won barely half the votes of its membership. This happened because the TV networks, with the exception of CBS, polled union households but not union *members*–and even in the latter case Teamsters union members and others who had endorsed Reagan were included. When the CBS/*New York Times* poll queried union members, they found 57 percent were for Mondale, 41 percent for Reagan.

Two public-opinion research firms—Peter D. Hart Research Associates and Fingerhut-Granados Opinion Research—conducted surveys for the AFL–CIO, both among members and in households where members resided. Their polls of AFL–CIO households found 57 percent for Mondale and 43 percent for Reagan on top of the 61–39 count of AFL–CIO *members*. The AFL–CIO surely was justified when it claimed, "This shift toward the Democratic presidential candidate was all the more remarkable in the face of a sizable move in the opposite direction on the part of other voters." Nor was Peter Hart exaggerating when he asserted:

> In an election in which the Democratic nominee was severely weakened by major defections from the ranks of Democratic voters, the AFL–CIO was successful in maintaining a high degree of Democratic solidarity among its membership.

If we consider the tremendous margin that black

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voters racked up for Mondale over Reagan, it is not surprising that among black AFL–CIO members the margin was even greater: 94 to 6 percent. That older AFL–CIO members, 65 and over, voted against Reagan by a margin of 68 to 32 may not be surprising; but in an election where young voters went for Reagan by decisive percentages, it is noteworthy that AFL–CIO members under 35 voted for Mondale by 54 to 46 percent. The gender gap in the AFL–CIO was much wider than it was among voters generally—with white male members voting for Mondale 54 to 46 percent and women 61 to 39 percent. In voting for congressional offices, both Senate and House, AFL–CIO members chose Democrats by even wider margins than the general electorate, which managed to retain the Democratic House majority and reduced the Republican lead in the Senate by two seats.

With respect to issues, the electorate as a whole tended to support most policies favored by Mondale, such as a nuclear freeze and protecting American workers from unfair foreign competition. This contrast was accentuated among AFL–CIO members. Those AFL–CIO members who did vote for Reagan also backed labor positions on economic questions by margins of 5:1 and higher. It was unfortunate that the poll of AFL–CIO members did not include the matter of a nuclear freeze and stepping up efforts to negotiate an end to the arms race.

Organized labor was by far the single most active force in the Democratic election campaign. Considering the outcome, it has been suggested that this would lead to second thoughts about the wisdom of the unions endorsing a presidential candidate before the Democratic national convention. But Labor leaders seem more convinced than ever that this was a correct and proper decision; they note that pressure for such an endorsement by the AFL–CIO, and by practically all its affiliated unions, came from lower-echelon leaders who are close to the rank and file.

I ASKED LANE KIRKLAND, president of the AFL–CIO, in retrospect, would he say this new departure was a mistake? Gently, but with a sharp regard for the past half-century of labor history, Kirkland corrected a "widespread misconception" that organized labor has not been endorsing candidates before the nominating conventions.

Kirkland described the paradox that when labor actively participated with Democratic party political bosses in naming the nominee, it was considered normal; but when the rules were changed in 1968 and the primary contests became the major avenue by which the Democratic nominee was chosen, there was criticism. "We always thought it was right to represent our members in the political process." His predecessor, George Meany, Kirkland reminded me, strongly believed that labor should be involved in the political process at every stage. Before primaries assumed their present role, Kirkland recalled, there might be only a dozen people in the entire country who would be effectively involved in the search for and naming of the candidate. The procedure then did not involve widespread participation; still, the results were not always bad, and Kirkland mentioned Franklin D. Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy.

"I know because I was there," Kirkland said, recalling the many years when he had been Meany's chief aide, accompanying him or standing in for him at many of the top-level consultations. Yet he wasn't nostalgic about the days of the smoke-filled rooms. He didn't think that leaving the choice of a candidate for the presidency to the mayors of Chicago and Pittsburgh, the Democratic leaders of the Bronx and Manhattan's Tammany, along with a handful of labor leaders, was the best way to carry out this responsibility. Nor did he think it was so wonderful that a New Jersey Democratic leader could boast that he was always a delegate and never ran for delegate from New Jersey. But Kirkland did want to make the point that for the past 50 years and more labor had been consulted and involved both in the nominating process and the election campaigns. He remembered with pride how the AFL–CIO had carried the banner of John F. Kennedy despite the pressures put on it by Lyndon Johnson. He put equal emphasis on the labor campaign for Hubert Humphrey in 1968 and noted that he had participated in helping to set up a national labor committee to nominate Hubert Humphrey as the Democratic candidate. The AFL–CIO also played an "active role in state caucuses and in state party conventions in behalf of Humphrey," he said.

Kirkland sees 1968 as a turning point, with the new emphasis on mass participation in the nominating process. "We had to grapple with ways to play an effective role under the new rules," he said. But what evolved in the early period when primaries became the major road to nomination, Kirkland pointed out, was "a pattern that I believe was damaging to the internal solidarity of the trade union movement. With a premium on early and active participation in support of a prospective candidate, different parts of the trade union movement went for various candidates without consultation among themselves." Some acted out of oppor-

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tunistic motives, some because of ideological ones. "So you had the development of factionalism, with unions competing and vilifying each other.... There was then a continuation of active labor participation in the nominating stage of the campaign, but labor was divided, not united."

"Our motive in taking the new approach," Kirkland continued, "was designed as much to find a way to maintain trade union solidarity as it was to support any particular candidate. Because that was our major motive, we were wholly successful. We supplanted factionalism and division in the unions with a high degree of solidarity." It was a far more democratic way and enlisted far more labor participation in the campaign than it had before, Kirkland said.

What about the charges that the AFL–CIO leaders acted on their own, I asked him, without consulting their members? "By and large that's false," Kirkland answered, emphatically. Virtually every affiliated union of the AFL–CIO had a process of widespread and effective consultation, he continued. This varied among the unions—in some the membership was polled; others relied mainly on the local union officers who are chosen directly by the members and are responsible to them. Kirkland said he'd challenge anyone to name a large organization anywhere that had as carefully consulted with and received the views of its rank-and-file membership as the AFL–CIO did in endorsing Walter Mondale. Nor did he think anyone could find another large organization that had enlisted a higher proportion of rank-and-file members in conducting a political campaign.

Kirkland said that the AFL–CIO followed the rule that there must be a two-thirds vote in support of a candidate before there can be an endorsement. In local union voting on the presidential endorsement, the two-thirds rule was followed, and "Walter Mondale got a 90 percent per capita vote in the AFL–CIO."

WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE? Would there now always be an AFL–CIO early endorsement? "I am not necessarily wedded to the notion that we must endorse a candidate. I would be perfectly content if there were no endorsement when there's a failure to reach two-thirds support.... One thing I am wedded to," Kirkland went on, "that we all stick together, that's what I'm wedded to." If there is no two-thirds vote for one candidate, then there should be agreement by all not to endorse; if there is, the general agreement should be to endorse. "The basic element of the process," Kirkland pressed home, "is to reestablish and sustain the internal solidarity of the labor movement. Our main responsibility is to the membership, and their participation in the political process.... Without solidarity, we lose our effectiveness and become an element subject to manipulation by others."

And why did the attack against labor as a "special interest" acquire such currency? Kirkland thought this was a catchword in the primary elections, but not a factor in the general election. The media continued to misapply the term, he agreed. "The irony of the 'special interest' charge," Kirkland said, "is that politicians from Colorado or Florida or Georgia bleed the country for peanut, tobacco, citrus fruit, or water rights, while pontificating about the evils of 'special interests.'"

Kirkland paid his wry respects to Senator Gary Hart's use of the "special interest" attack on organized labor. "I recall," Kirkland said, "people from the Hart campaign called on us after the first super-Tuesday, to say that they thought the Senator could be persuaded to stop attacking labor as a 'special interest.'" Kirkland told them he didn't want *that* concession from the Hart campaign, because he felt Hart would hurt himself in industrial states such as Michigan, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Illinois with his "special interest" criticism of labor. And Hart did.

How can organized labor aspire to participation in an electoral majority, considering the demographic changes that have occurred in our country? (A reference to the rise of the economy's service sector and the decline of its industrial sector, the ever more white-collar and fewer blue-collar workers.) Kirkland replied that the membership rolls of the AFL–CIO reflect those very demographic changes. "There are 41 percent white-collar workers in the AFL–CIO and 38 percent blue-collar workers; also 20 to 22 percent craftspeople." He pointed out that there is a growing percentage of better-educated working people—a higher number of high school graduates and people with college degrees, also reflecting the demographic changes in the country. The demographic structure of the AFL–CIO, Kirkland noted, might be expected to make them incline toward Reagan—"except that they are trade unionists." That difference, Kirkland went on, meant that they voted 61 percent to 39 for Mondale, against Reagan: 25 percent more for Mondale than the general population. "There just weren't enough of us," he added ruefully.

There was little pessimism in Kirkland's view of the future. "We need just 60 votes in the Senate," he said, "to bring about sorely needed labor-law reform. That means we need 9 more Senators who will return to and uphold the standards and prac-

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tices of the National Labor Relations Act and demand a Labor Department that will live up to its name." He looks forward to the senatorial election of 1986, when 8 Republican Senators with execrable voting records and 5 more Republican Senators with just ordinarily bad records are up for reelection; all 13 won in 1980 by narrow margins. For Democratic legislators who might think that union-busting was the mandate on November 6, Kirkland recalled the film *The Bridge on the River Kwai* and spoke of those who might want to build bridges for the enemy. Here, too, he was optimistic. "House and Senate candidates will not spurn our support," Kirkland said, cheerfully. His contact with Democratic leaders throughout the country, he added, still shows a deep appreciation for what labor did in the election.

Returning to the matter of the service and industrial ratios in our economy, Kirkland said he didn't think an advanced service economy could survive without an industrial base. Nor did he think efforts to divide laborers and consumers were logical. The AFL–CIO president liked the comments of a famous Republican on this matter—Abe Lincoln's suggestion that if the Lord had wanted some to work while others ate he would have made some with hands and no mouths and others vice versa. "People need jobs in order to be consumers," Kirkland said, "and today they need education to get the jobs." He directed me to another Lincoln

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Murray Hausknecht

The Bernhard Goetz Scandal

When Bernhard Goetz was approached on a New York subway by four young black men demanding $5, he drew a revolver and fired all its dum-dum bullets at them. Two were hit in the back; one remains paralyzed and comatose in a hospital. A month later a grand jury indicted Goetz for the illegal possession of a weapon, the least serious charge that could be returned.

Some of the reactions to the shooting were predictable. The unspeakable *New York Post* and its visual counterpoint, television news shows, seized upon and exploited the public's immediate approval of Goetz and its gloating attitude toward his victims. Nor was it surprising that Mayor Koch initially condemned "vigilantism" in strong terms. After all, it would take a notably irresponsible public official to even suggest condoning such behavior.

But this was benignly to underestimate the intensity of public feeling and the irresponsibility of politicians. Approval of Goetz cut across class lines. Both readers of the *New York Times* and the *Post* approved the shooting and in some cases with a barely concealed racist bias. Some politicians also responded in this ugly way. Senator D'Amato volunteered to testify in Goetz's behalf, saying that "young thugs" in the subway "are menacing people by their very presence." Koch gradually modified his initial stand and hailed the grand jury's decision as "Solomonic."

The celebration of Bernhard Goetz is a form of incivility just as surely as his behavior was a violation of civility. Charitably viewed, Goetz was a badly frightened man who snapped under the pressure of facing a personal nightmare. It is difficult not to empathize with the anguish of a person who sees himself in so extreme a situation. His violence is latent in all people; it is especially not too far from the surface among those whose fears and anger are rooted in the very real and ever-present threat of urban crime.

But simple civility demands the control of impulses and acts of violence. The mugger's aggressiveness and often senseless violence that stir our own hostile feelings magnify the possibilities for violence in the community. Civility requires not only control of the criminal but regulation of the demands for vengeance. A criminal justice system represents those constraints; a failure to indict a Goetz is just as much a failure of the system as criminals escaping deserved retribution. No verdict is "Solomonic" that subverts civility.

And here is the heart of the scandal. When the "respectable elements" of a community echo and amplify unrestrained anger and racism, when they openly sympathize with and condone the wrongdoer, they are helping to institutionalize incivility as a way of life. There is only cold comfort to be had from noting the irony that those highly committed to the virtues of conservatism also celebrate Bernhard Goetz, a prototypical threat to the maintenance of that social order so dear to conservative prejudices. Such ironies are not terribly appealing to subway riders who must now keep a wary eye not only on potential muggers but also on law-abiding citizens who will feel freer to draw and fire their illegal revolvers to uphold law and order. □

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quote, which I dutifully dug up, where the first Republican President said:

> As each man has one mouth to be fed, and one pair of hands to furnish food, it was probably intended that that particular pair of hands should feed that particular mouth—that each head is the natural guardian, director and protector of the hands and mouth inseparably connected with it; that being so, every head should be cultivated, and improved, by whatever will add to its capacity for performing its charge. In one word, Free Labor insists on universal education.

To my contention that the Democratic party and labor had neglected the issue of the nuclear arms race and the dangers of nuclear war, Kirkland said they had not played down the issue and that it was in the forefront of the campaign. I was not convinced. But he surely agreed that the people are deeply concerned about the dangers of nuclear war and want multilateral reduction of the deadly weapons.

Why did we lose? First, in bantering fashion, Kirkland said that in a race between Mother Theresa and Marie Antoinette, with the latter emphasizing not only that everything is all right and if there's no bread do eat cake, the queen won hands down. He cited three reasons. First, that the Republicans, above all Reagan, managed to monopolize the matter of patriotism and devotion to country. Second, that Reagan has a most acute political nose. The Democrats had lost that kind of nose, which senses what moves people and how they are influenced. Third, and he emphasized this, there were the circumstances of economic recovery. With regard to the first factor Kirkland described how local unions all over the country recite the pledge of allegiance to the flag at the opening of all their meetings. There's a deep-felt sentiment that moves them, he said.

Kirkland then summarized, in his view,

> the one compelling issue between the Republican and Democratic parties: the question of what is the appropriate role of the federal government in a modern economy. . . . The New Deal proved that private enterprise and state government, without the federal government's participation and guidance, will give us poorhouses and will not pave country roads; homes will be lit by kerosene while children suffer from hookworm, dysentery, and pellagra.

Only when the federal government got to them could such problems be solved. "Government is not the problem, it is an instrument for solving problems, and it must continuously seek out ways to promote the general welfare." To which another Lincoln quote is a fitting amen: "To secure to each laborer the whole product of his labor, or as nearly as possible, is a most worthy object of any good government."

WAS THE SOLIDARITY that labor achieved in its campaign for Mondale dissipated after November 6? Conversations with leaders of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees' union, the United Auto Workers, the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, and the United Steelworkers of America revealed a remarkable consensus among labor chiefs. They may be different types, with varied backgrounds, at times at odds with each other; but all emphatically affirmed the correctness of the election strategy.

• *William Lucy*, secretary-treasurer of AFSCME, said, "Labor unions have a single major responsibility—to protect the living standards of their people," and that includes "participation in the political life of the country." He felt that many people who voted for President Reagan "wanted to be shielded from reality and just to feel good about themselves." He also thought that Mondale's position on higher taxes was too easily misinterpreted and helped the Republicans. Labor would have played a more decisive part, Lucy said, if its organization efforts among the unorganized had been pursued with greater vigor, more means, and more success.

Are white-collar and service employees too hard to organize? Lucy emphatically denied this. He cited two recent events: the organization by his union of the 30,000 employees in the California University system, and then of between 6,000 and 7,000 clerical and technical state employees in Iowa.

• *Gerald McEntee*, the president of AFSCME, pointed out how their union spent months consulting with its 3,000 locals to determine its endorsement for 1984. He said that the union had 25,000 volunteers in the campaign, not "because I was out there with a whip and gun; they were there because they were committed."

• *Jacob Sheinkman*, secretary-treasurer of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers, said his union's decision to endorse Mondale followed a poll of the membership, in which a great majority of the 60,000 participating members wanted the Minnesotan. "It was something that rose from the bottom to the top, not the other way," he insisted.

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Why, then, the loss on November 6? The average American feels, I'm OK now, Sheinkman said. He agreed that the issue of nuclear war or negotiations for peace had not been as aggressively pursued as it might have been. He also thought the campaign didn't sufficiently appreciate the widespread sentiment for a positive approach and for a feeling of optimism about the future of the country.

• *Owen Bieber*, president of the UAW, said it certainly was not a mistake to endorse a candidate before the nominating convention. "I believe," Bieber said, "that a preconvention endorsement also gave us greater impact within the Democratic party. No longer could the candidates assume that, regardless of their stands on issues, they would be assured of labor support if they won the nomination."

And why did the Republican message seem to appeal more successfully to younger voters? Bieber thought that "the Democrats did let the Republicans seize the issue of jobs and the future—two key issues for young people." Bieber also felt that the Democratic emphasis on the budget deficit and the need for higher taxes "was not appealing to young voters." He didn't think the youth vote had moved permanently to the Republicans. "We've got to champion funding for education to bring people into the high-tech jobs of the 1990s, not into McDonald jobs. We've also got to push for access to home ownership through lower interest rates."

Bieber also observed that the Auto Workers and other AFL–CIO members had voted by large majorities for Mondale—and that many people who voted for Reagan were still supporters of labor and of Democratic positions. According to public-opinion surveys, the UAW president said, "Those Democrats who crossed over to vote for Reagan still support the view that government should do *more* to protect people from the power of big banks and big corporations, and that government has a responsibility to see that able-bodied people have work. Those Democrats may have voted for Reagan in this election, but they still don't buy his antigovernment, antifairness economic philosophy."

• Finally, *Lynn Williams*, president of the United Steelworkers of America, said his membership had been more active than ever in such key areas as Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois, and that the Mondale-Ferraro ticket won large majorities in the steel communities of Youngstown, northern Indiana, Chicago, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. He added that many political observers were "now projecting the recapture of the Senate by the Democrats in 1986."

Perhaps the inscription on the mural in the AFL–CIO headquarters exaggerates when it says: LABOR OMNIA VINCIT. But labor may help win the Senate for the Democrats in 1986 and then—who knows about 1988? □

The Rich and the Poor

President Reagan's notion of an "opportunity society" rests on the assumption that economic growth helps everyone, that everyone can get their slice of a larger pie. According to an important new study by Joseph A. Pechman of the Brookings Institution, this assumption seems to be wrong. In the first reliable analysis of American family income in recent years, Pechman reports that the distribution of income has not changed at all in the last 20 years. Indeed, Pechman concludes that if the much-maligned social programs of the 1960s had not been in place, income distribution would have become far more unequal during the past two decades. In addition, he demonstrates that the progressive tax system—far from punishing the industrious rich ever more harshly in order to pamper the slothful poor, as recent mythology claims—has virtually stopped being progressive at all. . . .

Pechman's surprising conclusion is that this progressive redistribution of income has been more than swallowed up by regressive changes in the market economy. In 1966, the poorest fifth of American families had 4 percent of total American family income before tax, and the richest fifth had around 47 percent. Two decades later, the figures are almost exactly the same. In other words, all the programs of the Great Society, all the welfare, Food Stamps, increased Social Security, and the like have simply kept things in place. If the programs had not existed, the gap between rich and poor would have increased enormously.

—*New Republic*, February 18, 1985 □

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Jack Metzgar

Johnstown, Pa.: Ordeal of a Union Town

They had a merry Christmas in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. For the first time in three years, the holiday passed without a steel mill being shut down. The unemployment rate was about 14 percent, nearly double the national average but well below the 25 percent Johnstown suffered into the spring of 1983. Many people think the worst is over, and some are optimistic about the town's economic prospects.

Johnstown has attracted a lot of media attention since 1982, when it led the nation in unemployment. This mill town 60 miles southeast of Pittsburgh has become a regular stop on the rust-bowl circuit. Most reporters, while noting the sufferings of the unemployed, have been more impressed with Johnstown's positive qualities. It doesn't look like postwar Dresden or the South Bronx. It has one of the lowest crime rates in the country and a high savings rate. Even in its depression, delinquency rates for bank loans remained substantially below the national average.

Before too long an enterprising reporter is also going to notice that the "retraining" program set up in Johnstown by Mainstream Access is now being touted as a "national model" and that the new "Johnstown Corp." is one of the few examples of a shuttered mill being reopened by new ownership. With a look at the new Main Street and at long-term employment increases in the banks, retail outlets, hospitals, and at the University of Pittsburgh's Johnstown branch, you could argue that this town, a backward place for most of the 20th century, probably arrived at the future a little earlier than most of the scores of factory towns that are dying throughout the Northeast and Midwest. Whether it truly works is a more complicated question.

Because it was a classic company town for nearly 100 years, Johnstown has always been a place with class relations particularly visible. Even into the 1970s, the essential reality of Johnstown has been a conflict between labor and capital—not in the abstract sense of *Das Kapital*, but in concrete daily struggles waged by you and your friends against "the company."

In large measure, the United Steelworkers of America won their fight with Bethlehem and U.S. Steel in the 1950s and 1960s. It also organized dozens of machine shops, and everything from dairy workers to bank tellers. USWA and other union workers fought hard for wages, benefits, and workplace protections that until a few years ago were among the best in the world. By 1977, when the steel shutdowns began, Johnstown was a strong union town.

As the Steelworkers gradually put limits on the giant steel companies' control at the workplace, the town's social and political life began to develop autonomously as well. The local business class freed itself from Bethlehem Steel's dominance and, with bipartisan political (and union) support, it initiated extensive urban redevelopment plans.

With the decline of steel employment, the power of both the steel companies and the Steelworkers plummeted, and the local business class acquired undisputed leadership. Since 1977 steel jobs in Johnstown—and USWA membership in steel—have dropped from 13,200 to about 2,500. Similar drops in employment (from 10,000 to 6,000) have occurred at the dozens of coal mines surrounding Johnstown. Meanwhile supermarkets shut down dozens of stores, extracted concessions from the United Food & Commercial Workers, and in one instance busted the union entirely. Teacher, fire fighter, police, and municipal unions were taken to the wall for job cuts and contract concessions.

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DURING THE DEPTHS OF JOHNSTOWN'S DEPRESSION in 1982 and 1983, a ferocious antiunion sentiment emerged in this formerly solid union town. Though the steel companies started it, the antiunion campaign had a popular base among unorganized workers (in retail outlets, banks, insurance companies) and above all in the professional middle class, which had long resented Steelworkers' wages and power. And even many other union workers joined in. Teachers complained that Steelworker wages were too high for jobs requiring little education or skill. Steelworkers wondered how teaching could be compared to "real" work in the mills.

Through it all, the local business leadership maintained a calm distance. The local media fueled antiunion sentiment, not by rabid attacks, but by a studied "neutrality" that "naturally" gravitated toward company information (often in the absence of effective union publicity). When the dust settled, the local business class was there to pick up the pieces. Schooled through years of playing both ends against the middle, this class has exhibited a resourcefulness not typical of an urban area of scarcely 100,000 people.

The new Main Street is their monument, 20 years in the making, a token of their independence from steel and of their hope for a service-based economy suitable for Yuppies. The new Main Street is a substantial accomplishment. I've seen Homestead and Youngstown and formerly thriving commercial strips in Chicago and Detroit, where vacant buildings and boarded-up storefronts, broken windows, and trash give everyone a feeling that things are out of control, that the living will soon be broken or dead. A good part of Johnstown's downtown was like that for most of the past five years; some of it still is.

Anchored by an expanded hospital, a bank, a new Holiday Inn, and City Hall, Main Street also includes two high-rise office buildings and a series of spiffed-up exteriors of small shops and stores. Still, this new Main Street is not universally acclaimed. A lot of working-class people resent it. Main Street used to be theirs, a place where men in steel-toed shoes and women in work jeans felt at home. No longer.

There used to be 17 bars in that five-block area—everything from the seedy to the merely tawdry to the comfortably clean; now there are three, the best comfortably clean, the other two better than that. A half-dozen greasy-spoon restaurants have been eliminated. Gone, too, are the three old Main Street pool halls, each with its distinct level, or lack, of respectability.

There are now fewer places for people to gather, fewer places for hanging out to see who you might bump into. And the street suggests that a narrower range of behavior and dress than before is now acceptable.

The new Main Street is a shot in the arm for Johnstown, a sign that things are moving ahead. But it's not the Main Street of a steel town anymore, or of a union town. A lot of people are being left behind, and still more will be.

THE MOOD IN JOHNSTOWN is good right now. "We're coming back," a lot of people told me. Others said, more modestly, "There's going to be a Johnstown."

Ask somebody who lived through 1932 and 1933, when unemployment was nearly 25 percent here, what 1936 and 1937 were like, as unemployment dipped to a mere 15 percent. Many old-timers will tell you that those were very good years. When you've been face-down in the mud, to rise to your knees can feel better than standing up used to. 5,000 more people were working in Cambria and Somerset counties in late 1984 than had worked in 1983. In a labor force of scarcely 100,000, that's nothing to sneeze at. But the worst is not yet over. Though there's going to be a Johnstown of some sort, working-class Johnstown is all but dead.

The area has sustained a net loss of 13,000 jobs since 1977. 6,500 people have left the labor force since 1980; if they hadn't, the unemployment rate would be over 20 percent. 15,000 remain unemployed. Few of the remaining jobs pay enough to sustain the working-class way of life that had been established through a century of struggle with "the company." Much of the apparent prosperity—the well-kept homes, the healthy savings accounts, the consumer spending—is based on union pensions. As retirees die off, that money will be lost to the local economy and fewer and fewer retirees will have the kind of pensions that sustain life, let alone savings accounts. Nor has Johnstown heard its last shutdown announcement from Bethlehem Steel—though, it's true, there's not a helluva lot left to shut down.

The 11,000 steel and 4,000 coal-mining jobs that have been lost were some of the best-paying in the world. Steelworkers had top-of-the-line pensions and health coverage. Many of those who were 55 years old or older and with 20 or more years' service got special shutdown pensions, which pro-

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vide a bridge until they're 62 and get Social Security. Retirees' health insurance is paid for by the company, as negotiated by the union. And many of the permanently laid-off got union-negotiated severance payments estimated to average nearly $3,000 after taxes. Indeed, a good part of the union-negotiated way of life goes on even after the company is gone. Even one of Johnstown's growth industries, health care, is based on the continuing health insurance extracted from the companies decades ago by union struggle.

Many of the jobs that have been created in the last few years are in retail trade. The largest downtown department store pays the minimum wage ($3.35 an hour) or just above, even for women who have worked there for decades. One of the local banks is USWA-organized, so the banks pay somewhat better—about $5 an hour for a starting teller. The United Food & Commercial Workers' Union has fought valiantly against contract concessions, in one instance allowing A & P to close a dozen stores rather than accept a drastically substandard contract. But last year another supermarket chain, Riverside Markets, shut down its stores, met its obligations to union workers, then sold buildings and inventory to a new owner, who hired back many of the same workers without a union contract. Riverside workers who used to earn $11 an hour now make $6.

In working-class Johnstown the wage trend is clear. The best-paying job is retirement. What's left of the steel mills exhibits the same trend. In 1977 the Johnstown plant of Bethlehem Steel employed 12,000 people. Since then it has permanently closed facilities where more than 8,000 people worked. Actual employment at Bethlehem has been around 2,000. Though it's hard to say for sure, if Bethlehem were working at full capacity (which it hasn't for quite a while) as many as 3,600 might be employed. Of those, about 1,500 would be in the car shop, manufacturing railroad cars; having granted concessions in order to keep the facility open, these workers are no longer covered by the Basic Steel Contract. People who once made $13 an hour now make about $7. In January 1985, Bethlehem asked its Johnstown workers for more wage concessions. Given the climate in Johnstown, it will most likely get them.

BESIDES MAIN STREET, the newly formed Johnstown Corp. is the proudest symbol of "the Johnstown recovery." During the last week of 1983, U.S. Steel announced the closing of its Johnstown Works, permanently eliminating 1,200 jobs. Even before the closing took place, local business leaders went into action. They found a buyer who, with the help of a $4 million Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) from the federal government, reopened the place as "Johnstown Corporation." Though Johnstown Corp. employed only 200 people by the end of 1984, it hopes to build up to 800 over the next few years. The new company reported a profit in the final quarter of '84, and just before Christmas paid out a small profit-sharing bonus to its workers.

THE KEY to the deal facilitating Johnstown Corp. was that U.S. Steel (USS) absorbed the costs of the shutdown before selling the plant. USS assumed the obligations of its union contract—pensions and health benefits for retirees and severance pay for those who were eligible. Then United Steelworkers Local 1288 was disbanded.

This left the new owners free of union requirements. They can hire whom they want and pay a lot less. The plant is a combination foundry and machine shop, so it had a large number of skilled workers. In most instances, it makes sense to hire those who had worked for U.S. Steel, but the new owners are free to choose. Union activists and other "trouble-makers" are being by-passed, even where they're acknowledged as the best on their machine. In many instances management is hiring pensioners who worked there before the shutdown and whose health insurance is covered by their pension. Some workers claim that Johnstown Corp. is getting federal money to "train" former USS workers for work they've been doing for 20 and 30 years.

In order to get its UDAG money, Johnstown Corp. had to form a new USWA local. The new local, with an office inside the plant, negotiated a five-year contract when it had only 33 members. This contract calls for several of the fancy new sorts of provisions recommended by labor-relations experts—stock purchases, profit-sharing, and two seats on the company's board of directors. *But there is no pension.* Men who made $15 an hour now get $9, those who made $12 get $6, and those who made $10 get $4.50—which qualifies some for Food Stamps.

So few plants that shut down are ever reopened that Johnstown Corp. is a national story in the business press—an example of what entrepreneurial initiative can do to salvage rust-bowl communi-

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ties. I've observed too many plant-closing situations not to appreciate the activism of the Johnstown business class. Part of me agrees with the Johnstown Corp. worker who said, "It's better than nothing." All of me agrees with another who replied, "That's about all it's better than."

I GREW UP IN JOHNSTOWN during a period when life was getting better. The wages USWA Local 1288 extracted from U.S. Steel financed a good part of my college education. My father, a machinist there and a shop steward for 1288, retired at 57 and lived 12 of the best years of his life off his Steelworkers' pension. When he was young in the 1930s and had risked his job by doing a little organizing for the Steelworkers' Organizing Committee, had he ever expected to live so well? Without hesitation, he said "no," he had never dreamed such a thing. And that's not what had been important to him at first. "The big thing was the fear, you can't imagine the fear," he said, "they had your job and they owned you, you couldn't look at them cross-eyed. All I wanted was a 'mouth,' some protection for saying what I thought."

The fear is back in Johnstown. Steven Smedlak (a pseudonym) is 46 years old. He put in 18 years at U.S. Steel as a machinist and was a minor officer in USWA 1288. He and his wife have four kids still living at home. The family lives on $310 a month from Public Assistance and another $203 in Food Stamps. Steve has had six weeks of work since Thanksgiving 1981. Because of his former union activism, he doesn't expect to be hired back at Johnstown Corp.

The Smedlaks' home is paid for—"In that respect, we're lucky." Their old frame house, purchased years ago for $6,000, might sell for $12,000 now in Johnstown's depressed market. But if they sell their home, they'll have to pay back everything they've received from welfare. There's no national job market for the kinds of machines Steven knows how to operate and, anyway, it's impossible to imagine leaving their network of family and friends and moving away.

Steven Smedlak is the kind of man the Johnstown Chamber of Commerce likes to brag about—a hard-working, second-generation Slovak, a man slow to anger and quick to apologize. He doesn't frighten easily and never panics, the type of guy who digs in, holds his ground, and gets the job done. This is called the "Johnstown spirit."

Shortly before Christmas the Smedlaks' youngest daughter was arrested for shoplifting. The fine was $77, which the justice of the peace is allowing them to pay in installments. Thank God, their 14-year-old son Bryan got his buck last hunting season and the freezer is full of deer meat—none of which, so far as they know, has to be deducted from the welfare check. In a quiet moment Steven told me, "I've never been so scared." □

Timothy Sears

Lone-Star Liberals Regroup

"There's no point in being a moderate in Texas," State Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower has remarked, " 'cause the only things in the middle of the road are yellow stripes and dead armadillos."

It helps to keep that observation in mind when considering the meaning of the 1984 Republican landslide in Texas. Perhaps more than any other place in the nation, it exemplifies Michael Harrington's thesis that Americans have been moving simultaneously to the left, the right, and the center. Over the years, the Lone Star state has produced some of the nation's leading reactionaries, such as John Tower and Phil Gramm, as well as some outstanding liberals, such as Ralph Yarborough and Mickey Leland. Culturally deeply conserva-

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tive, Texans have supported both right-wing ideologues and militant populists. After giving liberals Jim Hightower and Ann Richards, the state's treasurer, an overwhelming victory in 1982, Texans supported the reelection of Ronald Reagan by a margin of nearly 30 percentage points. Like the land itself, ranging from dense pine forests and bayous to barren deserts, Texas politics is a study in contrasts.

The roots of the present political situation can be traced to the 1950s, when the conservative Democratic leaders who dominated state politics publicly endorsed Dwight Eisenhower for president, sparking an open revolt by the loyal Democrats. In the years that followed, the Texas Democratic party was the arena for a no-holds-barred faction fight between the Dixiecrat establishment, led by John Connally and Houston oilman Jesse Jones, and the liberal insurgency organized by the Steelworkers' leader Eddie Ball, labor lawyer Chris Dixie, and Houston housewife Billie Carr. Building a grass-roots network of blacks, Mexican-Americans, and blue-collar whites, the liberals helped elect Ralph Yarborough to the Senate in 1958 and carry the state for John Kennedy two years later. Meanwhile, the so-called Tory Democrats, with big business and rural white voters solidly behind them, continued to dominate Texas politics throughout the '60s and '70s. The long and bitter battle for control of the Democratic party often took harsh and ugly forms, as when conservative challenger Lloyd Bentsen won the 1970 Senate primary with TV commercials implying that incumbent Yarborough was personally responsible for the riots at the '68 Chicago convention.

Over the last decade, however, the power of the Dixiecrats has steadily declined. The old Southern-style one-party system has broken down, leaving a stronger Republican party and a more liberal Democratic party. In part, this has been a by-product of the influx of Northerners, in the '60s and '70s, drawn by the state's growing economy. The Republican professional from Hempstead moving up the corporate ladder in Dallas and the blue-collar liberal Democrat from Detroit finding work in Houston's booming construction industry both maintained their political affiliations, the one strengthening the GOP and the other pulling the Democratic party to the left. The liberals were also reinforced by the growing political activism of the state's blacks and Chicanos, who together make up a third of the population. At the same time, Connally and many other Texas conservatives, and much of the big-business money, switched allegiance to the Republican party.

Thus, in 1978, the well-heeled Texas GOP elected its first governor since Reconstruction—right-wing oil tycoon Bill Clements. The Democrats spent the next four years getting their house in order, rebuilding their grass-roots organization and strengthening their ties with the labor movement. Working closely with the unions and minority organizations, the Democrats launched a massive voter-registration drive in minority and working-class neighborhoods. In 1982, all this hard work paid off. Texas was hard hit by the Reagan recession, particularly as the drop in world oil prices led to massive lay-offs of refinery workers, steelworkers, sailors, and longshoremen along the Gulf Coast. The Democratic ticket included such dynamic left-wing populists as Hightower and Richards, and such conservatives as Senator Lloyd Bentsen and Lieutenant Governor Bill Hobby, and moderate Mark White for governor; uniting all factions of the party, the statewide Democratic campaign was better coordinated than any in recent history. These factors, bolstered by Clements's arrogance and abrasiveness, generated an unprecedented Democratic turnout. Although Clements received a quarter of a million more votes than he had four years earlier, he lost by more than a quarter of a million votes.

SO WHY DID MONDALE AND FERRARO LOSE by a margin of nearly 1.5 million two years later? And why, in the Steelworkers' Political Director Sam Dawson's phrase, did "Reagan's coattails drag all the way to the ground"? The Republicans swept the state, gaining four congressional seats and innumerable judges, sheriffs, and other local and county officials. (Even Republican candidates were stunned by the magnitude of their victory. One who was elected district judge had thought she had so little chance of winning that she was on a two-week vacation on Election Day.) Perhaps worst of all for Texas liberals, Lloyd Doggett was buried in the GOP landslide by Phil Gramm, the former boll weevil Democrat who, as a member of the House budget committee, had coauthored Reagan's first budget. How could Doggett, a Lincolnesque young state senator and former consumer leader, be beaten so badly by a reactionary ideologue like Gramm?

One partial answer is: *money*. "We'll never know

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how much money was poured into that Senate race," Dawson comments. Noting that the national Republican party targeted the Texas and North Carolina Senate races, and that these were the only two states where Reagan's coattails had a dramatic effect, he contends that the massive spending on the GOP Senate campaigns had a decisive impact on the whole ticket. If all of the independent spending by corporations, trade associations, the National Rifle Association, and various ideological PACs is included, Dawson estimates that Doggett may have been outspent by 3:1 or even 4:1.

The Republicans not only had more money to get their message across; most Anglo voters thought they had a more convincing message. While Mondale and Doggett sought to downplay their liberalism in order to appeal to moderates, Gramm emphasized the right-wing purity of his opinions. A former Texas A&M economics professor, Gramm presented himself as a man of deep conviction who had endured persecution at the hands of big-spending Yankee liberals because of his supply-side ideology. "When I had to choose between supporting Tip O'Neill and supporting my constituents," he told Texans, "I stood for you." While his campaign against Doggett included heavy doses of gay-baiting and blasts at Ted Kennedy and the "labor bosses," much of Gramm's appeal lay in the fact that he was seen as a man of uncompromising principle.

IN THE WAKE of the 1984 defeat, Texas liberals are again regrouping. While most observers agree that they will avoid open confrontations with the moderate and conservative Democrats for the next few years—so that it now appears unlikely that any liberal will challenge Hobby or White in the 1986 primaries—liberal activists are definitely not demoralized. Billie Carr, leader of the liberal-left caucus on the Democratic National Committee, notes that unlike in previous years, there was no break in organizing efforts in the weeks immediately following the election: "Our folks got angry about those election results. I've never had to go to so many meetings in December, or seen people so anxious to get to work. They're more determined than ever."

Similarly, the state's labor movement is already gearing up for the next round. "We got whipped and we know it," Texas AFL–CIO Secretary-Treasurer Joe Gunn acknowledges, "but now we're ready to pick ourselves up and get back into the fight." While unions are virtually nonexistent in some parts of Texas—the largest right-to-work state—labor plays a critical role in state politics because of its strength in the oil-refining, steel-manufacturing, and shipping industries of the upper Gulf Coast. Beaumont, for instance, is said to be the most heavily unionized city in the nation. In such towns as Port Arthur, Texas City, and Galveston, and in industrial suburbs east of Houston such as Galena Park and Jacinto City, labor has the only substantial grass-roots political organization. And while the most politically active union, the Steelworkers, has been hit hard by plant closings, labor's money and organization remain essential to any successful Democratic campaign. So while many moderates are talking now about the need to cut the party's ties to "the special interest groups," Gunn sees that as a passing fad: "These candidates may want to sneak around and come in the back-door of the union hall, as they did 20 years ago, but they're still going to come."

Although Texas labor has suffered heavy membership losses in the last few years, total AFL–CIO membership in the state has probably stabilized. After losing nearly a quarter of a million members, primarily in the oil, steel, and construction industries, labor is beginning to make gains in other sectors. Despite the slump in the area's basic industry, the AFL–CIO's Houston Organizing Project has made some gains among clerical and public-sector workers. The Service Employees' International Union is successfully organizing workers at nursing homes and health-care facilities in East Texas. But organizing in an environment as conservative as Texas is no easy task. Organizers must contend not only with the aggressively anti-union attitudes of the business community but also with the exaggerated individualism of many workers in the Lone Star state, whose nostalgia for cowboylike self-sufficiency is reinforced by everything from beer commercials to country music.

Most Texans of all races are profoundly conservative in their social and cultural attitudes and remain deeply divided along racial lines. One of the sad ironies of the 1984 campaign was a strange commercial about "family values" aired by Gramm. It showed him fishing with his two sons and his wife waving to them, as his voice-over told of how close the family is. Yet the camera never caught a clear glimpse of the faces of Wendy Gramm and the children. Gramm may well have thought it impolitic to remind his conservative

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white constituents that his wife is Korean-American—a rather pathetic commentary on a candidate who blatantly appealed to antigay and anti-immigrant prejudices.

THE GREATEST CHALLENGE facing the liberal-labor alliance in Texas is not so much organizational as ideological. The 1982 election showed that the Democratic coalition has mastered the techniques of registering and turning out prospective voters; the 1984 elections showed that the Reaganites are more astute at persuading prospective voters. Texas Democrats must articulate a version of liberalism that means more to Anglo workers and farmers than just higher taxes and bureaucratism. Left populist leaders such as Hightower and Richards have made a good start on this project, with their anticorporate rhetoric and emphasis on economic justice.

Texas is a place of enormous economic disparities, of poverty in the midst of plenty. After decades of Texas leading the Sunbelt's economic growth, the state's average citizens are barely making ends meet. White workers and farmers can be persuaded that liberal policies are in their own self-interest. Hightower may be oversimplifying when he declares boldly that "the issue is that too few people have all the money and power." But by speaking directly to the real needs of ordinary Texans, he and his colleagues could build a multiracial movement that may forever change the face of Texas politics. □

In Cuba, They Kill Their Heroes . . .

GUSTAVO ARCOS *participated alongside Fidel Castro in the Cuban revolution. After the triumph of the revolution he was made ambassador to Belgium. A lifelong Catholic, he never accepted the growing Communist influence over the revolution. This led to accusations of treason. He then was asked to recant publicly for crimes he never committed. He refused and was jailed for five years, and was under house arrest for five more years. After these ten years he asked permission to leave the country and move to Miami where his ex-wife was suffering from cancer and where his eldest son was in a coma after an accident. He was refused permission to leave. In desperation, he and his brother tried to flee in a homemade boat. They were intercepted by the Cuban coastguard and arrested. In 1982 the Arcos brothers were sentenced to 14 years in jail.*

GUILLERMO CABRERA INFANTE *also participated in the Cuban revolution and was the editor of* Lunes de Revolución ("Monday of Revolution"). *He is the author of* Infante's Inferno. *He now lives in London.*

Since the first jailing of Gustavo Arcos I have been trying to help him. I have now renewed those efforts. I have met with Belgian politicians of the Socialist party, influential Spanish Socialists, British Members of Parliament, and with a member of the House of Lords. I have written to and spoken with Amnesty International. I also, not long ago, spoke with Jeane Kirkpatrick, then the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

It has all been futile. Even more futile was a discussion I had with a very powerful editor of an American magazine. He asked me: "What is Arcos?" I didn't understand. "I mean is he a writer or a painter or an intellectual?" I told him the only thing I could say: Gustavo Arcos is a human being. I don't believe he understood. They also don't understand in England. Not too long ago there was a conference of writers in London under the facetious title of "They Shoot Writers Don't They."

They invited me to speak. I told them, No thank you. I told them that the title wasn't true, that in totalitarian countries like Cuba the last people they kill are writers. They kill workers, peasants, underground leaders, Jehovah's Witnesses, whites and blacks. Everyone. But the last people they kill are the writers. These either remain silent, or they become frightened and their silence is bought with a house and a car and numerous trips out of the country. Or they leave their country as exiles. They don't kill the writers. It is precisely those men without imagination, like Gustavo Arcos, whom they kill. They kill their heroes.

— From "Lives of a Hero," by Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Vuelta, *December 1984*
Translated by RAFAEL PIROMAN □

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Robert Kuttner

A Troubled Union & Its New Leader

A Canadian Social Democrat Heads the Steel Union

This is the story of a gifted and effective trade unionist who finds himself president of America's most battered major industrial union. The story raises the perennial question of how much difference one leader can make when historical forces are less than auspicious. It sheds light on the desperate condition of America's labor movement, after the collapse of the peculiar social contract known as "business unionism." And it suggests some reasons for guarded optimism.

At 60, Lynn Russell Williams is the freshest face to appear on the American labor scene in a generation. He is a doggedly persistent labor organizer as well as an idealistic, gentle, and incorruptible man. By temperament, he is rather more cerebral and outward-looking than many who sit with him on the AFL–CIO council. A native of Ontario and a founder of Canada's New Democratic party, Williams is possibly the most interesting and promising Canadian export to the American democratic left since John Kenneth Galbraith.

Williams took over last March as International president of the United Steelworkers of America, at a critical moment in the union's history, with membership down in just five years from 1.4 million to barely 700,000 in the wake of devastating plant closings. The union he inherits epitomizes the double-edged character of the American labor movement. It has raised its members' wages far above the industrial average—leaving the union defensive and unpopular. It was the model of the responsible trade union, exchanging shop-floor militancy for two decades of regular wage increases—and then found it lacked the solidarity to take a major strike. It is a union with raucous rank-and-file energies—which previous presidents have seen as an annoyance rather than an asset.

The USWA today is a union marooned in declining, high-wage industries; it has organized few workers since the mid-1970s. It is a peculiar mix of the democratic and the oligarchic; the union's International officers and its 35 district directors are popularly elected; yet staff representatives hired by the International have immense power over day-to-day life of all but the largest locals. In the hands of a conservative president, like the union's second president David McDonald or Williams's immediate predecessor Lloyd McBride, that structural compromise translated into a stultifying alliance between Pittsburgh and entrenched district directors, in which organizer positions went for local patronage, and rank-and-file militancy was discouraged. Under a more venturesome president, like Williams, the relative decentralization to the district level leaves an immense amount of operating power in the hands of district directors—most of whom initially opposed Williams. Thus, as a kind of top-down reformer in concert with the rank and file, Williams must thread his way among local fiefdoms that he doesn't entirely control, co-opting here, tapping rank-and-file energy there, picking shots carefully, only selectively playing out-and-out hardball.

Williams himself is double-edged. He is not a rank-and-file militant. If anything, he is the consummate staff man, having spent more than two decades as a staff rep in Ontario and then as director of the union's big District 6 (Eastern Canada), before being tapped in 1977

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to run for the elected post of International secretary. 1977 was the year Eddie Sadlowski mounted a famous and ultimately unsuccessful rank-and-file challenge to the union administration. Williams ran that year as part of the administration slate.

Yet the Canadian trade-union culture that nurtured Williams is rather more open, democratic, and progressive. And Williams is hardly just another machine president of the International. Since taking over the union last March, he has been very hospitable to the rank and filers, most dramatically throwing his full weight behind the radical proposal by the rank-and-file Tri-State conference to establish a public authority to seize and revitalize steel mills abandoned by U.S. Steel. "Under Williams, the International has turned around 180 degrees," says Mike Stout, a griever at USWA Local 1397 at U.S. Steel's Homestead Works who is a longtime critic of the International's isolation and a member of Tri-State's executive board. Before Williams, the International actively discouraged worker/community buyout plans.

It is no accident that Williams is from another country; his origins in the Canadian labor movement provide some clues to his openness. Williams is the first Canadian ever to head a major international (that is, U.S.-based) union. His accession to the Steelworkers presidency is the culmination of a career dedicated to the belief that Canadians should not be the stepchildren of the North American labor movement. After almost a decade in Pittsburgh, first as International secretary, then as acting president, and finally winning election as president in his own right last March, Williams still considers himself Canadian. "The whole point," he says, "was to win election as a Canadian." To understand something of what makes Williams so special, one needs first to consider the Canadian labor movement where he learned his politics.

Williams was born in 1924, in Springfield, Ontario. He grew up in Sarnia, on the southern shore of Lake Huron, the son of a United Church of Christ minister to a working-class congregation hard hit by the Depression. In the mid 1930s, as a pre-teen, young Williams had many school friends whose fathers were out of work. "Being in a preacher's house, often I'd come home from school and my mother would be feeding somebody," Williams recalls. In the late 1930s, Williams began leading youth groups in the working-class neighborhoods of Hamilton, through the local YMCA. It was a mix of community organizing and social work, and permeated by the political spirit of the CCF, the forerunner of the Canadian New Democratic party. His mentor was a YMCA leader named Howard Conquergood, a veteran of CCF youth organizing. Later Williams followed him into the fledgling Steelworkers union.

There was a key difference between the early Steelworkers union in the U.S. and in Canada. In the U.S., the new Wagner Act and the friendly Roosevelt administration offered a good organizing climate. In 1937 U.S. Steel recognized the union without a strike. By 1942, when the Steelworkers Organizing Committee officially became the United Steelworkers of America, at a founding convention in Cleveland, the smaller steelmakers had followed U.S. Steel's lead, and union membership had ballooned to 650,000.

The Canadian soil, however, was much more arduous, the industry more resistant, and the political climate far less favorable. There was no friendly government and no Wagner Act. And the process of building a steel union was much more like the auto experience—bitter strikes, setbacks, and struggles. Not until 1944 did Canada's Cabinet approve an Order in Council that gave Canadian unions the opportunity to win certification based on fair elections, along the lines of the Wagner Act. As a consequence, the Canadian steel locals, to a greater extent than most American ones, were the fruit of hard-won, militant local organizing—they were built from the ground up, a key difference that persists to this day. The legacy of those early shop struggles is a steel union more internally democratic. Canadian steel locals, for example, have always had rank-and-file ratification of contracts, something sought in vain by many American locals; and they have been more willing to strike.

The second big difference is that the Cana-

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dian labor movement is part of a functioning social democratic party, the NDP, and earlier of the CCF. The NDP, which has formed the government in three provinces and is the official opposition in Ontario, gives the Canadian labor movement a somewhat broader agenda than most American union leaders have. It also provides a philosophical grounding. Williams was one of the founders of the modern NDP, has stood for the Canadian parliament as an NDP candidate, has served on the NDP board, and was a leader of the centrist faction that ousted a left-wing splinter a decade ago.

In many respects, then, the odyssey of Lynn Williams parallels that of the Canadian labor movement. In its early years, Canadian labor was a stepchild of the bigger U.S. labor federations. Today Canadian unions have come into their own. For some unionists, such as Bob White who recently led the Canadian Auto Workers out of the UAW, that reality means building a stronger national union movement in Canada, no longer tied to the apron strings of the AFL–CIO. But for Lynn Williams, a mark of coming of age is the fact that a Canadian can head a prominent International union.

Three decades ago, both Canada and the United States had unionization rates of about 30 percent. Today thanks to a tougher, more unified, militant movement and a friendlier legal climate (union-busting is virtually illegal in Canada), the Canadian rate is close to 40 percent—while the U.S. rate has dropped to 17 percent.

Williams's first years with the Steelworkers, interestingly, were not in steel organizing at all. In 1946, as a young university graduate committed to labor organizing, he took a blue-collar job at the John Inglis plant in Toronto, assembling hot water heaters. He was tapped to go to a labor summer school, and soon found himself on the Steelworkers' payroll. But it would be almost a decade before Williams again saw the inside of a mill.

One of the major Canadian labor struggles of the late 1940s was an epic campaign to organize Eaton's, Toronto's largest department store. The Steelworkers, along with other new industrial unions, were underwriting much of the campaign. In late 1947, Williams was asked to sign on as the second of three paid organizers at Eaton's. Although the first Eaton's drive ended in failure—at this writing, Eaton's employees are on strike to win union recognition—Williams stayed in retail organizing eight years before returning to the steel union. His experience in retail organizing gave him a conviction that union membership must be pervasive, and his current strategy for reviving the Steelworkers is to "organize everything that moves." As the most polished of the young organizers at Eaton's, Williams was put in charge of organizing the commission sales clerks, who were notoriously skeptical about unions and hard to organize.

"Lynn was the best all-around union organizer I've seen anywhere," recalls Wally Ross, a fellow organizer on the Eaton campaign. "He was incredibly mature for a guy in his twenties. He was so articulate, so persuasive, very convinced and very sincere. He could do anything—write leaflets, speak to meetings, talk to people one-on-one, raise money. I've known guys who were better at one aspect of organizing or another, but Lynn could do it all. He could do everything better than 95 percent of the organizers I've seen, and do it perfectly."

By 1949, more than 5,000 employees had signed union cards. That year the Conservative Ontario labor board changed the law, requiring union members to pay a dollar as proof of membership. It would be two more years before the election was held; during that time Eaton's successfully manipulated the size of the bargaining unit and won over numerous employees with unexpected raises. When the vote was finally held, in December 1951, the union narrowly lost.

"It was a marvelous campaign," Williams recalls. "It did everything but succeed. The miracle was that it damn near succeeded, despite overwhelming odds."

In 1956, after a very frustrating career as organizer in the retailing trades, Williams returned to the Steelworkers. His first assignment was organizing aluminum smelter workers in a bitter jurisdictional fight between the Steelworkers and the building trades at Kitimat, B.C., in the mountains north of Vancouver. "The company owned the whole town, and

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they wouldn't let a Steelworkers organizer in," Williams says. "They owned the hotel. Once they found out you were from the Steelworkers, the police would put you on a plane and away you went."

Despite the merger of craft and industrial union federations, into the AFL–CIO in the United States and the CLC in Canada, the leadership agreed to one final fair jurisdictional vote in Kitimat, which the Steelworkers won. "While everyone was singing 'Solidarity Forever' in Toronto, we were kicking hell out of each other in Kitimat," Williams recalls.

Subsequently, Williams, then 32, came back East as the Steelworkers' chief man in the heavily industrialized Niagara peninsula, the scene of intense organizing. There Williams became the most trusted lieutenant to Larry Sefton, the head of the Union's big District 6, which then included most of Canada. Williams's job in those years was very much like that of a circuit-riding preacher—keeping track of scores of locals, going to meetings four and five nights a week, helping to process grievances, negotiate contracts, and enlisting new members. He went to funerals and weddings. He gave speeches at the local Rotary Club. People remembered him. He would stop in when the rank and file came off shift and buy one round of drinks, on his small per-diem allowance. Under his tenure, membership doubled.

When Sefton succumbed to cancer in 1973, Williams succeeded him as chief of District 6, then representing some 100,000 workers. And in 1977, when McBride was casting about for a Canadian to add to the ticket, Williams was the logical choice.

The post of International secretary was tailor-made for Lynn Williams. Its responsibilities include liaison with foreign unions—the internationalism that Williams cherishes—and public relations. The secretary is also in charge of the internal details of union life, at which Williams excels: administering contracts, labor education, personnel. In practiced hands, such dull bureaucratic details are levers of union power and the ingredients of higher office.

In November 1983, after the sudden death of President Lloyd McBride, Williams was named acting president by the executive board, and then elected in his own right in a special membership election in March 1984.

The union that Williams inherits epitomizes the weakened condition of American industrial unionism generally. From the early 1950s right up to the recession of the early 1980s, the USWA relied increasingly on an entente with the oligarchic steel industry, at a cost to its vitality as a labor organization. Under David J. McDonald, the union's second president (1953–65), CIO-style militancy faded into sermons about "people's capitalism." Internally, the union steadily became more and more of a staff-dominated oligarchy.

The mechanisms by which the union establishment retained control were not especially subtle. The USWA constitution gave the International president control over all hiring and firing of staff. If a district director was a close ally of Pittsburgh, he retained the practical right to do a lot of the hiring. It added up to a tight machine. Too many staff jobs reflected patronage. A lot of local union presidents, good and bad, found their way onto union staff jobs in this fashion. Some losing candidates for elective positions favored by the International also found their way onto staff jobs, which further tarnished the International's credibility with the rank and file. It was also common for staff reps to contribute money and time to help elect favored candidates for district director. In practice, a good deal of the rank-and-file energy that makes for a strong, democratic union was seen by the union administration as "opposition" activity to be co-opted or discouraged.

Staff have particular influence over small locals that are not sizable enough to have their own staff operation. In practice, it is the staff reps who process grievances and who have great influence over how well a local president can do his job. At a USWA convention, small locals have disproportionate voting strength (a local gets one delegate for the first 500 members and one for each additional 500), and it is very common for staff reps to obtain credentials as delegates from locals that can't afford to send rank-and-file people.

On the floor of a convention, local delegates

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wear red badges, staffers wear blue ones; and you can pick out scores of people wearing both color badges, indicating a staff rep who has obtained delegate credentials. Most conventions are well-orchestrated affairs. Resolutions may be brought on any topic by any local, but all resolutions are referred to committee, and by the time they are brought to the floor they are invariably well sanitized. Thus dissenting views are made to appear less influential than they often are.

A number of long-standing issues have come to symbolize rank-and-file resentment of the union establishment, particularly in the basic steel locals. The most powerful of these is the "right to ratify"—the demand that the membership have the final say over proposed contracts. This is a prerogative that Steelworkers enjoy in Canada, but not in the United States. Rather, the contract is ratified by the conference of steel local presidents. The theory is that this indirect democracy is better suited to the industrywide bargaining the union enjoyed in the 1960s and 1970s.

At the same time, the union has a history of rank-and-file upheaval, often unfocused and sometimes surprisingly effective. Dissidents frequently capture local presidencies, and occasionally district directorships. At this writing, District 6, Lynn Williams's old base, is headed by a radical who ousted a key Williams ally. On the other hand, District 31, Eddie Sadlowski's former territory, is back in moderate hands. Since McDonald's time, an immense amount of rank-and-file energy in the Steelworkers has been consumed battling autocratic leadership, rather than building a union. It is a tribute to the democratic face of the union that this dissent surfaces at all.

In the 1957 election, an obscure local leader named Don Rarick challenged McDonald, only to be vilified, red-baited, beaten up, outspent with dues money from the union's treasury—and still, he collected over a third of the popular vote for president. In 1965, I. W. Abel, then the union secretary-treasurer, finally capitalized on accumulated rank-and-file distaste for president McDonald's "tuxedo unionism," and narrowly won the union presidency. But Abel's victory was as much a palace coup supported by most of the International officers, staff, and key entrenched district directors, as a real rank-and-file revolt.

The Abel slate had campaigned on the pledge to "restore rank-and-file control over basic policy." But soon Abel was seen as being as distant and autocratic as McDonald had been. Demands for procedural reforms were ignored. By 1969, a second unknown challenger named Emil Narick almost toppled Abel, winning 41 percent of the vote, and carrying the basic steel locals nearly two-to-one. 1977 saw Eddie Sadlowski, the popular director of District 31, mount a broadly based rank-and-file challenge. Sadlowski's upset election to his own district directorship had come after the U.S. Labor Department ordered an election overturned. The union administration candidate in 1977 was not Abel but Lloyd McBride, himself a district director, who had put together a diverse slate that seemed to stand for more openness and participation. With Abel having decided to step down in favor of a more electable candidate and staff resources uniting behind one unity candidate, even Sadlowski was beaten by 88,000 votes.

From the traditional perspective of the International staff, all of this political machine-building is necessary to keep control over what might otherwise be an undisciplined and ungovernable mass. In that respect, the steel union has resembled a single-party regime in a mildly authoritarian democracy, such as Mexico, Tanzania, or Cook County—blending a lot of local pulling and hauling, popular mobilization, and relatively free elections with the extensive use of machine patronage. But the combination of business unionism, staff domination, and the active discouragement of rank-and-file energies by local district machines has added up to a union ill equipped to fight back when hard times came and industry-union détente flew apart.

The last major steel strike, a bitter and costly 116-day walkout in 1959, led to a labor-management determination to avoid mass strikes at all cost. In 1973, this was formalized in the Experimental Negotiating Agreement (ENA), under which the union essentially agreed to a no-strike pledge in exchange for regular wage increases tied to productivity plus inflation. The White House, under both Republican and

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Democratic presidents, eager to avoid major strikes in steel, essentially encouraged the industry to buy labor peace. In exchange, Washington offered Pittsburgh protection from foreign imports, though without demanding in return any industry commitment to modernization. This was "tripartism" at its worst.

Under this umbrella, the steel union seemed to thrive. Over 100,000 new members were organized during the early 1970s. Another 200,000 were added through mergers with smaller unions, bringing total union strength to a peak of 1.4 million. Between 1964 and 1981, Steelworkers' wages rose from 135 percent of the average industrial wage to a high of 164 percent. By 1981, the average full-time Steelworker was earning about $28,000 a year. Whenever foreign competition threatened this rosy entente, labor and management jointly petitioned for more protection.

The strategy was like the Oliver Wendell Holmes "wonderful one-hoss shay, that . . .ran a hundred years to a day"—and suddenly collapsed all at once from multiple causes. By the late 1970s, several developing countries enjoyed both more advanced steelmaking technology and lower labor costs than their American competitors. Domestically, "mini-mills," using scrap inputs, could underprice the big integrated manufacturers in several product lines. At precisely the same historical moment, autos were getting smaller, economic growth was slowing, and new plastics and composite products were cutting into steel markets, irrevocably reducing steel demand. When the era of union-industry collaboration suddenly gave way to an era of concession-bargaining, the union lacked the militancy, the cohesion, or the strategic vision effectively to fight back.

By the early 1980s, the steel union found itself reeling from the effects of the deep recession. By 1982 there were 200,000 members on layoff, dozens of plants had shut down their furnaces permanently. The remaining steelmakers were demanding unprecedented wage concessions. As bargaining began for the big American contracts up for renewal in 1983, Lloyd McBride became convinced that the union could not take a strike.

Most Steelworkers under age 45 in the United States have never experienced a major strike. After a generation of business unionism, in which the steel union traded militancy for ever fatter pay packets, there wasn't much left of worker solidarity at many plants. The plain fear, expressed privately by McBride, was that desperate members on layoff would scab, and that many others, grateful to still have jobs, would cross picket lines.

In such circumstances, the union had little leverage. McBride struggled to cut his losses, fighting the company on one side and his militant rank and file critics on the other. Twice rebuffed by the conference of steel local presidents during protracted negotiations, McBride finally sold a concession contract that cut Steelworkers' pay by $245 a month, suspended cost-of-living adjustments, eliminated several days of vacation, shaved fringe benefits, and in all saved the industry $3 billion.

The leadership failed to negotiate any meaningful quid pro quos: no commitment by the industry to reinvest savings in steel modernization (U.S. Steel's purchase of Marathon Oil came in 1982); no guarantees against further layoffs or shutdowns; no trade of wage concessions for greater union participation; no share of future profits or seats on company boards. When U.S. Steel announced plans to import semifinished steel from Britain, the union's opposition took the form of hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of full-page newspaper ads, warning that "The British Are Coming." Militant activity on behalf of unemployed Steelworkers and community alliances in the battered steel valleys were left, by default, to radical local activists, with the International watching skeptically from the sidelines.

In the spring of 1983, exhausted by concession negotiations, McBride suffered a heart attack. The negotiations were taken over by the union's International vice president, a grizzled and cantankerous former foundry worker named Joe Odorcich. Williams, as secretary, was not directly involved in the steel negotiations, though he privately supported the leadership's concessions strategy.

On November 7, 1983, McBride suffered his second heart attack, which proved fatal. The union constitution makes no provision for auto-

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matic succession; an acting president must be named by the executive board. Almost immediately Odorcich, Williams, and the union's treasurer Frank Mckee began taking soundings. Seemingly, Odorcich was the logical successor. He had taken over the steel negotiations from the fallen McBride. Unlike Williams, he was an ethnic, a former factory worker, and of course an American.

But Williams, likable, capable, meticulous, disarmingly inoffensive, had the votes. McBride, before his death, had told several executive-council members that he considered Williams the better man. And when the executive board met on November 18 to name the acting president, they picked Lynn Williams. A special election of the union's full membership was held in March 1984, to fill the remainder of McBride's term.

The union's diverse rank-and-file groups failed to unite behind a candidate. Williams's opponent was International treasurer Frank Mckee, who tried to oust Williams by appealing to crude, anti-Canadian chauvinism. Williams won that vote narrowly, but only by carrying the union's Canadian districts overwhelmingly. He actually lost the American districts by a few thousand votes. Today he is immensely popular on both sides of the Great Lakes, and favored to win the 1986 election overwhelmingly.

The generation of Canadian Steelworker leaders that Williams epitomizes stands for labor internationalism, social democratic politics, and hard, thorough organizing. Though Williams's background is that of a middle-class staff organizer, he thrived in a Canadian union milieu that is rather more participatory than many American steel locals, and he is by nature and experience far less fearful of rank-and-file initiatives than his recent American predecessors.

"In our union," Williams says, "you have a lot of members eager to accomplish something, and the establishment sometimes gets so concerned about maintaining a policy line that they frustrate a lot of people. If I contribute anything, it's that I try to make room for everybody and use all these talents. If somebody still wants to have a political fight, it is relatively easy to handle when you have a lot of good projects going. There is so much to do. Let's just go out and do it."

The changes in the posture of the International since Williams became president have not been revolutionary, but they have been significant: a willingness to experiment; an openness to the rank and file; an emphasis on organizing and on corporate campaigns; and a new posture toward concessions that insists on quid pro quos.

Bottled up in the Steelworkers' hierarchy are a lot of idealistic and talented people, and the advent of Lynn Williams has liberated enormous energies. During McBride's tenure, Williams served as chair of a committee on the future of the union. And as it happened, the September 1984 convention in Cleveland, Williams's first as union president, was also the occasion for the presentation of the committee's report.

Williams's most important recommendation was that the union give top priority to organizing. He succeeded in getting the convention to approve an amendment capping the union's strike fund, and using the excess to rebuild organizing staff. This will give Williams an infusion estimated at some $18 million. He plans to hire about 100 new organizers.

The exercise is not without its pitfalls. The Steelworkers have no substantial central organizing staff, and the local organizing staff is well known for deadwood. Williams will have to take care that these positions are occupied by genuine organizers, and do not just become so much grist for the union's various patronage machines.

The Steelworkers have not done much organizing since the mid-1970s. Last year I visited a showcase organizing drive of the Southwire Company, a large cable factory in Carrollton, Alabama, where Steelworkers have mounted an intense campaign. Carrollton, a notorious company town, is admittedly difficult territory. Over the years, three other unions have been chased out of town and the Steelworkers, to their credit, had stayed. But the organizing activity has been lackluster. All year, organizers were supposedly a few weeks away from filing for an NLRB election. How-

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ever, the top union leadership was distressed to learn that the organizers were consistently exaggerating how many signed cards they had, and the drive has essentially fizzled. Even under a Williams, who genuinely wants to stress organizing, the climate is difficult and the internal obstacles are great. Williams, in effect, must rebuild an organizing capacity almost from scratch.

As part of the new organizing drive, Williams created two new districts in the Southwest, and these, at least, can be built from the ground up. Williams also plans a series of in-depth six-week organizing schools, something the union has lacked, and he has asked each district director to develop a long-term organizing plan, another first. "We need to get the district directors turned on to organizing, not to build a big, central organizing department," Williams says.

A potential problem with the "organize everything that moves" philosophy is that other unions have the same idea; One Big Union is a great and venerable idea—but not ten big unions. Every established union cannot become the next transport and general workers union of the United States. The Steelworkers have gotten their fingers burned going after supermarket clerks, public employees, and other nonindustrial targets considered the turf of other unions. Meanwhile, nobody is lining up to organize high-tech workers. One Steelworker official told me proudly how the union was throwing resources into Ohio—to compete with several other internationals to enlist members of the state's civil-service association.

A more hopeful change is a new willingness on the part of the International to consider ideas on their merits, with far less worry about which faction thought them up. The "right to ratify" issue, long a divisive, symbolic demand for democratization, has been turned over to a basic steel conference committee, and Williams says he will go along with whatever the steel conference decides.

In past years, various rank-and-file activities on behalf of the unemployed workers in the Mon Valley and elsewhere, and various worker buyout schemes, received very little help from the International, whose officers were worried about getting into bed with union radicals who had been a thorn in the side of the International on other issues. In January of this year, the Steelworkers unveiled a comprehensive feasibility study proposing a takeover of U.S. Steel's idled Duquesne works, a 20-year-old facility the steel company deemed not sufficiently profitable, once the most productive facility in the Monongahela Valley. In helping to underwrite the study, the USWA worked in concert with the City of Pittsburgh, the Allegheny County Board of Commissioners, the local congressman, other mayors, Steelworkers Local 1256, and the Tri-State Conference on Steel.

The move was revolutionary in two respects. It was the first time that the International union threw its full weight behind a rank-and-file proposal to keep a mill operating through a worker-community buyout. The study was released in late January, at a massive town meeting, and the news of it led the Pittsburgh papers the next day. The audacious proposal forced U.S. Steel to delay imminent plans for demolishing the facility. And it put the Steelworkers on the offensive for a change, by tapping the reservoir of rank-and-file and community energies. The Tri-State Conference on Steel is a rank-and-file caucus, with no official standing in the union. Yet the International's publicity operation was turned over to the rank-and-file people, and it performed well.

Equally bold was the proposal itself. The study was prepared by the New York-based firm Locker-Abrecht Associates, which helped design the successful Machinists-Eastern Airlines deal. Locker-Abrecht also brought in a Pittsburgh engineering firm and used Data Resources, Inc., to estimate market demand. The proposal would use eminent domain to create a public authority to run the blast furnaces and melt shop. Rather than competing with U.S. Steel's own output, which the steelmaker deems unacceptable, a revitalized mill at Duquesne would use continuous casting technology to compete with imported semifinished steel products. And rather than relying on wage cuts, Locker-Abrecht calculated that more efficient deployment of manpower could cut production costs to a competitive $205 per ton.

Williams has also embraced another for-

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ward-looking strategy, the "corporate campaign." At the Phelps Dodge copper mines in Arizona, the company defied an industrywide settlement, and it succeeded in bringing in strikebreakers, with the connivance of the Democratic governor, Bruce Babbitt. At this writing, the company has just won a decertification election, though this will soon be moot when the mines are temporarily shut down pending a rise in the price of copper. Williams struck back with a sophisticated corporate campaign against Phelps Dodge, putting pressure on the company's sources of financing. In December, a thousand trade unionists picketed the company's New York corporate headquarters. And sources close to the negotiations say that Phelps Dodge's Arizona mines are likely to close down for a while, and when they reopen a settlement is likely, giving priority to laid-off Steelworker members.

At the Danly Machine Shop in Cicero, Ill., in another bitter strike in which management went all out to break the union, the Steelworkers successfully applied corporate pressure to Danly's parent conglomerate, the Ogden Corporation. Ultimately, a settlement was reached and although the terms were only mediocre, on the key point of giving union members preference over strikebreakers the union prevailed.

The union's key staff person on the Danly campaign, interestingly enough, was Eddie Sadlowski. Eight years after his insurgent campaign for the union presidency, Sadlowski is now a union official on the District 31 staff. Encountered at the Steelworkers' September 1984 biennial convention at Pittsburgh, Sadlowski said the most important changes in the union under Williams seemed symbolic.

"I noticed a lot of little things at this convention," Sadlowski said, "things most people might not perceive. I don't see any bugles blowing. I didn't hear six stanzas of 'Hail to the Chief.' I don't see any manhandling of people hawking pamphlets opposed to the leadership. Once you stop concerning yourself with that stuff, you can start building a union. If I'm right, then good things are going to happen. Maybe great things." □

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Peter Steinfels

The Bishops and Their Critics

Human Solidarity and the Rights of the Vulnerable

"Modern capitalism," wrote John Maynard Keynes, "is absolutely irreligious, without internal union, without much public spirit, often, though not always, a mere congeries of possessors and pursuers." Over 60 years ago, R. H. Tawney, who cited those lines from the young Keynes, set out to explore how this condition had come about. In *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, he examined the great "intellectual and moral conversion" of the 16th and 17th centuries. This period saw —

> the abdication of the Christian Churches from departments of economic conduct and social theory long claimed as their province [and] the general acceptance by thinkers of a scale of ethical values, which turned the desire for pecuniary gain from a perilous, if natural, frailty into the idol of philosophers and the mainspring of society.

In this "secularization of social and economic philosophy," a synthesis of values, presided over by religion, was —

> resolved into its elements—politics, business, and spiritual exercises; each assumes a separate and independent vitality and obeys the laws of its own being. . . . separate and parallel compartments, between which a due balance should be maintained, but which have no vital connection with each other.

Like other politically committed scholars, Tawney saw his historical investigations as intimately linked to contemporary concerns. In this case, it was his belief that —

> the philosophy which would keep economic interests and ethical idealism safely locked up in their separate compartments finds that each of the prisoners is increasingly restive. . . . Religious thought is no longer content to dismiss the transactions of business and the institutions of society as matters irrelevant to the life of the spirit. . . . The line of division between the spheres of religion and secular business . . . is shifting. . . . By common consent the treaty of partition has lapsed and the boundaries are once more in motion. . . . Rightly or wrongly, with wisdom or with its opposite, not only in England but on the Continent and in America, not only in one denomination but among Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and Nonconformists, an attempt is being made to restate the practical implications of the social ethics of the Christian faith, in a form sufficiently comprehensive to provide a standard by which to judge the collective actions and institutions of mankind, in the sphere both of international politics and social organization. . . . As in the analogous problem of relations between Church and State, issues which were thought to have been buried . . . have shown in our own day that they were not dead, but sleeping. . . .

Tawney's observations could have been written yesterday—which makes them both exhilarating and discouraging. Since he wrote, efforts to overcome the modern division between economics and morality have repeatedly grown dormant and then stirred from slumber. And the reception afforded the latest effort—the vigorous first draft of a pastoral letter on the economy by America's Catholic bishops—shows how deep-seated are the opposing tendencies that Tawney studied six decades ago.

The decision to write such a letter was made at the same 1980 meeting of the bishops that also voted to prepare a pastoral letter addressing nuclear war. (One observer, looking back at this double-barreled decision, remarked that

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the bishops may be fiercely opposed to abortion and euthanasia but seem rather favorably inclined toward suicide.) Once the nuclear pastoral, which had been given priority, turned out to directly challenge current armaments policy—and in view of run-ins between national Catholic agencies and the Reagan administration over budget cutbacks affecting the poor—business circles grew uneasy about what might be ticking away in the bishops' work on the economy. The bishops seemed to be acting out the text of the classic Jewish telegram: "START WORRYING. MESSAGE TO FOLLOW."

A few people did more than start worrying. A group of Catholics, headed by William Simon and Michael Novak and heavily weighted with conservatives and neoconservatives linked to the Nixon and Reagan administrations, began preparing an alternative "lay" statement—an exercise, as one admirer described it, in "preemptive damage control." The bishops did their best to be accommodating. The list of individuals with whom the bishops held formal consultations is heavy with business executives; they met once with representatives of the Simon/Novak group and with Novak himself on several other occasions.

When the draft appeared last November 11, it did not disappoint. The contrast between its economic philosophy and that of an Administration that five days earlier had won a massive vote of confidence was front-page news.

Where the Administration celebrated the successes of the American economy, the bishops contrasted them with its persistent shortcomings. Where the Administration exalted American individualism, the bishops emphasized "communal solidarity." Where the Administration minimized—even derided—the economic role of government, the bishops endorsed government efforts to guide the economy and provide social welfare. Where the Administration prescribed inegalitarian tax measures and the acceptance of the discipline of unemployment as necessary steps toward prosperity, the bishops judged the existing level of socioeconomic inequality in America as "morally unacceptable"; they called for a new national commitment to full employment as the leading domestic priority; and they declared that the litmus test of any society's economy was the way it treated the poor and powerless. *Business Week* concluded that the letter's "comments on the workings of the economy in four areas—unemployment, poverty, economic relations with developing nations, and economic planning—amount to a wide-ranging critique of Reagan's less-is-more brand of governance."

Even a few of the president's supporters welcomed the letter. David Gergen, former director of communications at the Reagan White House, wrote: "The bishops have spoken up at exactly the right time and in the right way: at a moment when the nation is about to make crucial economic decisions, the bishops have said we must focus again on the rising tide of poverty in America."

Most conservatives were not so generous. Jerry Falwell saw the letter as pointing the way to communism. So, in effect, did Norman Podhoretz. A columnist in the *National Review* called the draft "economically illiterate" and "an appeal to envy" while comparing the bishops to Lenin and declaring them "spiritually impoverished." The journal's editors labeled the letter "ecclesiastical Mondaleism"; the bishops were "off-the-wall utopians" engaged in "the evisceration of their own moral and intellectual authority" and inflicting "severe wounds on the credibility of their Church." William F. Buckley, Jr., was restrained by comparison, merely dismissing the bishops' draft as "an accumulation of lumpen clichés" and "a purée of . . . vapidity."

George F. Will outdid Buckley in disdain. The bishops, he began, had "discovered that God subscribes to the liberal agenda." And dripping sarcasm he continued, "But, then, in the mental world to which the bishops, in their flight from complexity, have immigrated, there are no intellectual difficulties, no insoluble problems; there are only shortages of good will." Their letter, he continued, springs from minds "marinated in conventional wisdom"; they never entertain "a doubt about government programs."

The same tone marked the criticism by the neoconservative Charles Krauthammer, an editor at the nominally liberal *New Republic*.

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Given the economic failings of Catholicism in the past, the bishops "might proceed with a touch of humility. That quality is difficult to find" in the letter. Michael Novak called the draft "whiney and ungenerous"; Andrew M. Greeley, having duly distanced himself from the "nervous neighings" of Novak, concluded that the letter was "inept and inadequate."

These critics' complaints can be summed up in a handful of propositions. The bishops are platitudinous: who is against the poor anyhow? The bishops are uninformed: all these questions are terribly complex. The bishops are partisan: as spiritual leaders they should stick to announcing broad norms rather than acting like the Democratic party at prayer. The bishops are unrealistic: they slight the strengths of the U.S. economy while putting demands on it that, cumulatively, would be crippling. The bishops are behind the times: their proposals date from Great Society days or derive from the mixed economies of Western Europe and, even when successful, both these economic models have now reached the limits of their possibilities.

Amid all these criticisms, there are of course some valid points as well as a number of contradictory ones. But what a surprise to turn from these strictures to the text of the draft itself! One wonders, in fact, how many of the critics did so. The bishops' text is bracketed by reflections on precisely the problem that Tawney addressed:

> We are well aware of the difficulties involved in relating moral and religious values to economic life [the bishops say at the beginning]. Modern society has become so complex and fragmented that people have difficulty sensing the relationship among the different dimensions of their lives, such as the economic, the moral, and the religious.

And at the close of letter:

> None of us can afford to live a spiritually schizophrenic existence in which our private lives are oriented toward Christian discipleship while our economic activities are devoid of these same values.

But the bishops do not assume naively that they can return to a premodern worldview dominated by religious faith alone. Citing a text from the Second Vatican Council, they agree that social and economic affairs "enjoy their own laws and values, which must be gradually deciphered, put to use and regulated by human beings." They have turned to experts out of their "conviction that earthly affairs have a rightful independence which the Church and we as bishops must respect."

The bishops' awareness of the difficulties of their task is reflected in the very structure of the letter, which its critics generally ignore. It is divided into two parts.

The first part is entitled "Biblical and Theological Foundations." It is in turn subdivided into two sections. First comes a rich reflection on biblical themes of creation, covenant, and community; on the primacy of justice and solidarity with the poor in the biblical vision. This is followed by an elaboration of "Ethical Norms for Economic Life," which do not rely explicitly on the language or authority of Scripture—a response to the realities of secularization and pluralism that Tawney explored in their origins.

The bishops know that their words must be understandable and persuasive, at least in part, to those outside their religious tradition as well as to those within it. The first subsection speaks in a distinctly Christian voice; the second tries to address all citizens in a rationally defensible manner as accessible to the nonbeliever as the believer.

There are three things to be noted about this first part of the letter. One was emphasized in the press coverage—the bishops' outspoken insistence on the needs of the poor. Not so widely understood was how this insistence was part of an intensely social and communitarian vision. The bishops' starting point for evaluating the economy is *human dignity*, and human dignity is "realized in community with others." The bishops' focus was not on material deprivation per se but on whatever—material deprivation included, of course—kept people from being active participants in their communities. Respect for human dignity, in this participatory, communitarian sense, requires three things: a minimum level of material security; an opportunity for self-realization and commu-

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nity contribution through work; institutions that enhance social solidarity.

This emphasis on social solidarity led the bishops not only to endorse affirmative action and comparable worth as concepts relevant to correcting the effects of racial and sexual discrimination; it led them to two other controversial judgments. One was the conclusion that while they saw numerous justifications for inequalities of reward, the degree of *gross inequality* in income and wealth in America—quite independent of the absolute amount of well-being afforded those at lower levels—was itself "morally unacceptable." Second, the bishops called for an "experiment in economic democracy": an acceptance of economic rights —rights to minimum economic provision, to a worthwhile job, to an active role in directing one's work—parallet to the founding fathers' innovations in political democracy.

While the letter is definite and perhaps even radical in setting forth the standards by which an economy such as America's should be evaluated, it is simultaneously modest and even reticent—far too reticent, some would say—in plumping for any particular diagnosis of the economy's problems: "There is no clear consensus about the nature of the problems facing the country or about the best ways to address these problems effectively."

Again and again the bishops note the complexity of these issues. They don't pretend the church has all the answers, but they do think it can "make an important contribution to finding the right path." Again and again the bishops acknowledge that people of good will, Catholics among them, will disagree about particular economic policies. The bishops "expect and welcome debate." "There is certainly room for pluralism within the Church on these matters. . . . We do not seek to foreclose discussion."

By and large, it was not this first part of the bishops' draft, on ethical norms, that attracted most attention; it was the second part, on specific applications. Pastoral letters, it seems, are unlike loans: it is never the principle that earns the interest—but the distinction between the two parts of the letter is essential for understanding the bishops' work. In an introduction to the second part, they are utterly clear about the difference between their policy applications and what went before:

> The movement from principle to practice is a complex and sometimes difficult task. . . . Ethical values in themselves do not dictate specific kinds of programs or provide the blueprints for action. Rather, our principles must interact with empirical data, with historical, social and political realities, and with competing demands for limited resources. The effectiveness of our prudential judgments in this area will depend not only on the moral force of our principles, but also on the empirical accuracy of our information. . . . In certain cases, the same principles interpreted differently or combined with other assumptions may lead to different conclusions.

The bishops then repeat something that they said in their pastoral letter on nuclear weaponry:

> We do not intend that our treatment of each of these [specific] issues carry the same moral authority as our statement of universal moral principles and formal Church teaching. . . .

And so the bishops conclude:

> We expect that on complex economic questions a diversity of opinions on specific policy applications will exist, even among those who hold the same moral principles. . . . We urge mutual respect among different groups as they carry on this dialogue. For this process of reflection and dialogue will be most constructive if it is characterized not only by conviction and commitment, but also by civility and charity.

This, presumably, is the arrogance and "tone of magisterial righteousness" that Mr. Krauthammer (no stranger to either) finds so insufferable in the letter. This, no doubt, is the basis for the peroration of the article in *Commentary* by Peter Berger who, after writing a rather fine-grained critique of what is by his own account no radical document, suddenly declaims:

> Human lives are at stake: by what right, then, do these men appear before us, wrapped in the mantle of authority of prophets and popes stretching back to ancient Israel, and dare to tell us that one set of highly precarious policy choices represents the will of God in our time?

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It is, I admit, tedious to cite chapter and verse of the bishops' letter to refute the fatuousness of Krauthammer or the bluster of Berger. It might be more tedious yet to note all the further acknowledgments of complexity and uncertainty to be found throughout the second part of the draft. In discussing the difficulties of achieving a national commitment to full employment, for instance, the draft explicitly states that the problem derives not only from our shortage of good will but "is also a consequence of conflicting interpretations of what causes unemployment. . . . No single all-purpose cure is available." Government job programs have been marked by both "successes and failures," from which we can learn. Here, evidently, is what Mr. Will considers a "flight from complexity" or the refusal to admit intellectual difficulties or "entertain[ing] a doubt about government programs."

I don't want to pretend that there are no real problems with the bishops' letter or that nothing stands between them and their critics that is more substantial than the fog of condescension and polemic. Nonetheless, the disparity between the bishops' text and its critics' reports is dramatic enough to cry out for some explanation. Has functional illiteracy really made such inroads among my fellow journalists and editorial writers? Why do the bishops' critics so regularly up the ante in order to make their work of demolition that much easier? If the bishops condemn an aspect of the American economy as "morally unacceptable," then, supposedly, they have cursed it root and branch. If the bishops decry inequality, then, supposedly, they are calling, as Mr. Novak wrote, for the federal government to "have new and sweeping powers" to set limits on everyone's income and wealth.

Perhaps what we are seeing here is simply the territorial imperative. Neither Mr. Buckley nor Mr. Will nor Mr. Krauthammer nor Mr. Berger nor Mr. Novak are known for any contribution to the discipline of economics. They are not so much economists but, in their spheres, a species of aspiring bishops; one group of preachers defending turf against a rival group.

Less speculative, I believe, is the role a deep-seated stereotype may have played not only in the critics' characterization of the draft letter but in their very reading of it. It is the stereotype of the clergyman as an unworldly, moralistic, and at least pretentious, if not hypocritical, do-gooder. Like other stereotypes, this one is based on some bit of reality. But readers of the letter ought to consider another possibility. Consider that the committee drafting this letter was constituted of intelligent individuals, most of whom must even meet a large payroll and supervise a sizable network of activities and organizations. Assume that they actually listened to the approximately 125 individuals who appeared before them over several years of hearings and that these hearings, if nothing else, exposed them to multiple viewpoints and multiple complexities.

It may be consoling to some of the letter's critics to suppose that if the final product reached conclusions they don't favor this was so because of a "routine acceptance of liberal assumptions" or "childlike innocence." This supposition is somewhat arrogant. It excludes the possibility that the bishops knew very well what they were doing and, whether with ultimate wisdom or not, adopted a number of liberal positions on the basis of informed and considered judgments.

If one discards these mentioned stereotypes of the bishops, the lines of criticisms advanced against their letter by no means dissolve entirely, but they do appear in a new perspective. This is especially so when the bishops' draft is compared with the rival document from the Simon/Novak commission. It is true, for example, that there are lacunae in the bishops' considerations and references. There were undoubtedly alternative positions they did not sufficiently explore, as many on their left, it should be noted, as on their right.

But the same is true—with a vengeance—of the Simon/Novak letter. Its references to economic literature are far more ideologically "bunched" than those of the bishops. The point is not to argue the superiority of the bishops' letter to the Simon/Novak one—although I don't think that argument would be hard to make—but to note that as soon as moral teach-

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ers try at all to touch base with the real world, in our day they cannot avoid *some* alignment in the battles of social science, even as they strive to withhold canonization from Lord Keynes or Milton Friedman or Karl Marx.

The bishops are determined to avoid leaving their teaching at the high level of generality that invites every interpretation—and hence the charge of being platitudinous. They want to avoid the stratagem of the 18th-century divines whom Tawney wrote about and who, confronted with the vigor of an independent science of economics, began to "formulate the ethical principles of Christianity in terms of a comfortable ambiguity, and rarely indicate with any precision their application to commerce, finance, and the ownership of property."

When the bishops extend themselves to specific applications, they recognize the unavoidable danger of casting their lot with a particular school of economic thought—especially at a time when the disarray of contending schools is as great as it is today. Their strategy, therefore, is to cast this part of the letter in the form of a pedagogical stimulus. The topics they address "are illustrative topics intended to exemplify the interaction of moral values and economic issues in our day.... This document," they insist, "is not a technical blueprint for economic reform, but rather an attempt to foster a serious moral analysis of economic justice." In sum, this is their best attempt to show how the general norms drawn from Scripture and the social demands of human dignity apply to specific issues; others are welcome to reach different conclusions—provided they make the moral connections in a similarly serious and scrupulous fashion.

This defense of the bishops' procedure assumes, of course, that the general approach taken in their policy recommendations is at least a highly plausible one—and this many of their critics obviously deny. Once again it is interesting to turn to the Simon/Novak alternative. That document argues the case for an entrepreneurial capitalism relatively free of government regulation or efforts to redistribute income. In its support the Simon/Novak letter includes a lengthy "Table of Comparative Economic Measures" listing over 160 of the world's nations, and categorizing them as either *capitalist*, *mixed capitalist*, *capitalist-statist*, *mixed socialist*, *or socialist*. Each nation is rated according to its degree of political and economic freedom plus its per capita Gross National Product as of 1978 and a measure of material well-being called the Physical Quality of Life Index.

If one returns to the source from which this table came (a study published by Freedom House), one finds the following description of the "mixed capitalist" category: "Mixed capitalist systems... provide social services on a large scale through governmental or other nonprofit institutions, with the result that private control over property is sacrificed to egalitarian purposes. These nations still see capitalism as legitimate, but its legitimacy is accepted grudgingly by many in government."

Now I don't think that it would be unfair to say that the bishops' letter points more or less in the direction of such mixed capitalist regimes, while the Simon/Novak letter points in the direction of distinctly capitalist ones. That is why it is noteworthy that the very table reproduced in the Simon/Novak letter shows the mixed capitalist economies equaling the capitalist ones in freedom and excelling them in physical quality of life and in per capita Gross National Product.

And so, step by step, we are forced back from the second part of the bishops' draft, which has stirred all the controversy, to the first part. By and large, the letter's critics avoid confronting the bishops on this section. Everyone agrees on these principles, they suggest; it is only how we put them into operation that is at issue. *But does everyone really agree?* Do we really agree that an economy is to be evaluated not simply by the aggregate or average wealth it produces but by the way that wealth is distributed so that none experience exclusion? Or by the way the work that produces this wealth is organized, so that the everyday activity of all is imbued with meaning? Or by the way institutions foster participation and solidarity rather than passivity and isolation?

For all the genius and subtlety of the mind of Adam Smith—often as rashly caricatured by

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modern liberals as the bishops have been by their critics—it seems obvious to me that *he* did not accept the criteria the bishops set forth. Adam Smith was concerned about the well-being of the poor as well as that of the average person. But that well-being he defined largely in terms of material subsistence and consumption, and he saw it as precisely the product of the transformation whose description by Tawney began these observations: the division of life—

> into its elements—politics, business, and spiritual exercises; each assumes a separate and independent vitality and obeys the laws of its own being. . . . separate and parallel compartments, between which a due balance should be maintained, but which have no vital connection with each other.

It is noteworthy that what Tawney saw as a key problem of the modern world, this division, the Simon/Novak committee simply proposes as its solution. It presents this division of the social system into a separate political system, economic system, and moral-cultural system as a uniquely American innovation, in effect linking capitalism to our pride in America's political freedoms and institutions. These different systems are to serve as checks and balances, supports and correctives for one another. This is surely an improvement over the monolithic social system of a theocratic or totalitarian society.

Unfortunately, the Simon/Novak schema provides little guidance for determining when, short of theocracy or totalitarianism, the "separate and parallel compartments," to use Tawney's words, are no longer in "due balance." This is particularly so since the Simon/Novak letter did not risk, as the bishops did, going into particulars in detail. The bishops, on the other hand, have tried to propose what Tawney would call a "vital connection" between these separate compartments by their uncompromising moral stand on human solidarity and on the rights of the vulnerable and the excluded, and by their somewhat more tentative proposal for "economic democracy."

That the bishops' letter has proved controversial is said to stem not from its premises, which are unexceptionable, but from its concrete suggestions, which are said to be impractical and radical. I would argue, on the contrary, that the bishops' specific applications, though debatable, are relatively modest and open-ended. In the end, it is their very premises that sharply challenge the deeply rooted assumptions of the present moment. □

Alexander Erlich

(1912–1985)

We mourn the death, in January, of Alexander Erlich, a former editor of *Dissent* and an activist in the socialist movement all his life, notably in the Jewish Bund. Erlich was a professor of economics at Columbia University and a member of the executive committee of the W. Averill Harriman Institute for the Advanced Study of the Soviet Union at Columbia. His book *The Soviet Industrialization Debate: 1924–1928*, published in 1960, received high praise.

In remembering Alex, we remember as well the assassination of his father, Henryk, and of his father's comrade, Victor Alter, by Stalin in 1941.

THE EDITORS

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Octavio Paz

Europe: Recovery & Nihilism

The following article by the distinguished Mexican writer is taken, with permission, from a forthcoming book, One Earth, Four or Five Worlds, *to be published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. This book of political and cultural essays consists of writings that Paz published in Latin-American and Spanish periodicals and in a German Booklet from 1976 to 1984, which have been revised for the English-language version. In his Foreword Paz writes that these essays were written from a point of view "that I might call eccentric or simply marginal . . . never from [one] rooted in the certainties of an ideology with encyclopedic pretensions such as Marxism or in the immutable truths of religion such as Christianity and Islam. . . . I do not know whether these commentaries contain valid interpretations. . . . I do know they express the reactions and sentiments of an independent writer from Latin America confronting the modern world. They are not theory but testimony." Whether or not one agrees with this testimony in all respects, it is a pleasure to have it here.* — Eds.

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I: From Criticism to Terrorism

Around 1960 a series of civic upheavals began that made the West tremble. Contrary to the predictions of Marxism, the crisis was not an economic one, nor was its central protagonist the proletariat. It was a political crisis and, even more, a moral and spiritual one; its agents were not workers but a privileged group: students. In the United States the rebellion of the young played a decisive role in discrediting American policy in Indochina; in Western Europe it shattered the credibility and prestige of governments and institutions, if not their power.

The youth movement was not a revolution, in the strict sense of the word, although it made the language of revolution its own, nor was it a revolt; it was a rebellion, in the meaning I have given that term in other writings.[1] It was the rebellion of a segment of the middle class and a real "cultural revolution," in precisely the sense that the so-called one in China was not. The extraordinary freedom of mores in the West, above all in the sexual realm, is one of the consequences of the moral insurrection of the young in the '60s. Another is the progressive weakening of the notion of authority, be it governmental or paternal. Previous generations had seen the cult of the terrible father, adored and feared: Stalin, Hitler, Churchill, de Gaulle. In the decade of the '60s an ambiguous image, alternately angry and orgiastic—the Sons—displaced the saturnine Father. We went from the glorification of the solitary old man to the exaltation of the juvenile tribe.

Even though the disturbances in the universities shook the West, neither the Soviet Union nor the Communist parties in the various countries exploited or attempted to channel them.

[1] See *Alternating Current* (1973; original Spanish edition, *Corriente alterna*, 1967) and the chapter "Inicuas simetrías" ["Iniquitous Symmetries"], in *Hombres en su siglo* [Men in Their Time], 1984.

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On the contrary: they denounced these disturbances as anarchic, decadent, petit-bourgeois movements, manipulated by *agents provocateurs* of the right. The hostility of the Soviet hierarchy is understandable: the rebellion of the young was a libertarian movement and a passionate, total critique of the state and of authority as much as it was a rebellion against the capitalist consumer society.

The following decade saw the emergence, and the recognition in the West, of dissidents in the Soviet Union and in the other "socialist" countries. This has left its mark on the contemporary intellectual conscience, and its moral and political consequences will be felt more and more deeply, not only in Europe but in Latin America as well. For the first time, the dissidents of the Russian Empire managed to make themselves heard by European intellectuals.

Until just a few years ago, only a few marginal groups—anarchists, Surrealists, former Marxists and Communist militants who had shed their cassocks—had dared to describe bureaucratic "socialism" as what it really is: a new, more total, and merciless system of exploitation and repression.

Today no one dares defend "real socialism" as before, not even the members of the species we call "liberal intellectuals." Gide's criticisms in 1936 and Camus's more penetrating ones in 1951, prior to the revelations of the dissidents, seem timid; Trotsky's analyses insufficient; and even Souvarine's descriptions pale, though the latter, 40 years ago, was the first to understand the true nature of the Russian regime.

During the '70s, no moral and political critique appeared in the West that was comparable to that of the dissidents of the "socialist" countries—a notable contrast, yet one to which no one, as far as I know, has given serious thought. This is strange, since from the 16th century on, criticism has accompanied Europeans in all their undertakings and adventures, at some times in the form of confession and at others in the form of remorse. The West's modern history begins with the expansion of Spain and Portugal in Africa, Asia, and America; almost at once, denunciations of the horrors of the Conquest make their appearance, and descriptions—often wonderstruck—of indigenous societies are written. On the one hand, Pizarro; on the other, Las Casas and Sahagún. At times the conquistador himself is, in his own way, an ethnologist (Cortés). Guilt feelings of the West go by the name of anthropology, as Lévi-Strauss has pointed out: a science born at the same time as the European imperialism that it has outlived.

In the first half of the 20th century, the critique of the West was the work of its poets, its novelists, and its philosophers. Their criticism was unusually violent and lucid. The rebellion of the young in the '60s took up the same themes and lived them as passionate protest. The youth movement, admirable on more than one account, oscillated between religion and revolution, eros and utopia.

Then, as suddenly as it had begun, it was over. The rebellion of the young flared up when no one was expecting it and faded away just as unexpectedly, a phenomenon that our sociologists are still unable to explain. A passionate negation of the values reigning in the West, the cultural revolution of the '60s was the offspring of criticism, but, strictly speaking, it was not a critical movement. By this I mean that the protests, declarations, and manifestoes of the rebels set forth no ideas and concepts not already found in the works of the philosophers and poets of the immediately preceding generations.

The novelty of the rebellion was not intellectual but moral; the young did not discover other ideas—they lived, with passionate intensity, those they had inherited. In the '70s, rebellion died away and criticism fell silent. Feminism was an exception, but this movement began much earlier and will surely continue for several decades more. It is a process that belongs to the realm of the "long count." Although it has lost some of its impetus in the last few years, it is a phenomenon destined to endure and change history.

The heirs of these youthful rebels have been the terrorist bands. The West ceased to have critics and dissidents; the minorities in the opposition turned to clandestine action. This was the reverse of bolshevism: incapable of taking over the state and instituting ideological terror, the activists have been caught up in the

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ideology of terror. A portent of the times: as terrorist groups grow bolder and more intransigent, the governments of the West become more timid and hesitant. Is a government's skepticism the only possible answer to the terrorists' fanaticism?

The frankest justification of the necessity of the state was Hobbes's: "[Since] the condition of man is a condition of war of everyone against everyone," men have no other recourse save to yield part of their freedom to a sovereign authority capable of ensuring the peace and tranquillity of each and all. Yet even Hobbes conceded that "the condition of subject is a miserable one." A great contradiction: to lovers of freedom the erosion of the authority of government in the countries of the West ought to be a cause for rejoicing; the ideal of democracy may be defined succinctly as a strong people and a weak government. Yet the situation saddens us because the terrorists seem bent upon proving Hobbes right. Not only are their methods reprehensible; their ideal is not freedom but the establishment of sectarian despotism.

However pernicious the actions of these groups, the real evil of liberal capitalist societies lies not in them but in the predominant nihilism. It is a nihilism poles apart from that of Nietzsche: we are not confronted with a critical negation of established values but with their dissolution in a passive indifference. We would be closer to the mark to call it hedonism: the temper of the nihilist is tragic, that of the hedonist resigned. This hedonism, moreover, is far removed from that of Epicurus: it does not dare to look death in the face, and it is not a form of wisdom but a surrender. At one extreme it is a kind of gluttony, an insatiable craving for more and more; at the other it is dereliction, abdication, cowardice in the face of suffering and death.

Despite the sports and health cults, the attitude of the masses in the West implies a lowering of vital energy. A person lives for a greater number of years now, but they are empty, hollow years. Our hedonism is a hedonism for robots and wraiths. Viewing the body as merely a mechanism leads to the mechanization of pleasure; in its turn, the cult of the image—movies, television, advertising—gives rise to a sort of generalized voyeurism that converts bodies into shadows. Our materialism is not carnal: it is an abstraction. Our pornography is visual and mental; it exacerbates loneliness and verges at one extreme on masturbation, at the other on sadomasochism—elaborate solitary exercises, at once bloody and spectral.

The spectacle of the West today would have fascinated both Machiavelli and Diogenes, for quite different reasons. Americans, Europeans, Japanese have managed to overcome the postwar crisis and create a society that is the richest and most prosperous in human history. Never have so many had so much. Another great achievement is tolerance—a tolerance not only toward ideas and opinions but also toward mores and inclinations. Yet these material and political gains have not been matched by the attainment of a loftier wisdom or a more profound culture.

The spiritual panorama of the West is desolating: cheap tastes, triviality, shallowness, rebirth of superstition, degradation of eroticism, pleasure enrolled in the service of the communications media. But terrorism is not a critique of this situation: it is one of its symptoms. To the somnambulism of society, mechanically spinning round and round the endless production of objects and things, terrorism offers in opposition a frenzy no less somnambulistic but more destructive.

It is by no means an accident that terrorism has been most rampant in Germany, Italy, and Spain—the three countries where the historical process of modern society (the transition from the absolutist state to the democratic one) has been interrupted more than once by despotic regimes.

In all three countries, democracy is a recent institution. The national state—the necessary complement of Western societies' evolution toward democracy—came into being at a late date in Germany and Italy. The case of Spain was quite the contrary, but the results have been similar: the different peoples living side by side in the Iberian Peninsula were immobilized, from the 16th century on, in the straitjacket of a centralist, authoritarian state.

This does not mean, naturally, that the Germans, the Italians, and the Spaniards are

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doomed to terrorism by some kind of historical defect. As democracy and federalism are strengthened (and with them the national state), terrorism will decline. It seems to have nearly disappeared in Germany. Nor is one venturing too far to conjecture that it will diminish in Spain as well. It will not be government repression but the establishment of local and regional freedom and autonomy that will bring an end to Basque terrorism there. The ETA (Basque terrorists) is doomed to die, not suddenly, but as a consequence of gradual but inexorable isolation. Since it has ceased to represent popular aspirations, growing isolation will lead it to the worst form of violence: political suicide. The process will be slow but irreversible.

The activities of the Italian terrorists have been, more than anything, the result of the crisis of the state, which in turn has been the consequence of the double paralysis of the two great parties, the Christian Democrats and the Communists. The government goes around in circles, not getting anywhere, because the party in power, that of the Christian Democrats, no longer has any program beyond maintaining the status quo. It does not govern—or, rather, it has reduced the art of governing to a conjurer's trick in which it is dexterity that counts, a mastery of the art of compromise.

As for the Communist party, it does not know which way to turn. It has rejected Leninism but does not dare embrace democratic socialism wholeheartedly. It wavers between Lenin and Kautsky without yet having found its own proper course. Though Italian political life is an extremely agitated affair, nothing happens. Everybody scurries around yet remains in precisely the same place. Nor is the cold, obtuse anger of the terrorists and their pedantic teachers a way out. That is why they have failed. But the underlying problem nonetheless remains: Italy suffers from the absence of democratic socialism. The Italian Communists, the most flexible and intelligent in Europe, have set out to fill this gap, but they have not succeeded because of their historical genealogy. Their long association with Russian bureaucratic despotism is a sort of original sin that as yet no democratic baptism has been able to wash away.

And the case of Northern Ireland? As I see it, we are dealing here with a very different phenomenon. Irish terrorism was born of the explosive conjunction of two elements: a nationalism steeped in religious fervor, and the second-class status forced upon the Catholic minority. The history of the 20th century has confirmed something well known to all the historians of the past, something our ideologies have stubbornly ignored: the strongest, fiercest, most enduring political passions are nationalism and religion. In the case of the Irish, the union between the two is inextricable. Unlike the Basques, who do not want to unite with anyone except one another, the Catholics of Ulster feel that they are part of the Republic of Ireland.

Yet Irish Catholic nationalism is one thing and the IRA another. Two circumstances conspire against that organization: first, the Catholics are in the minority in Ulster; second, both the IRA's methods and its political program (a "socialism" of the Arab or African variety) have lost it friends and supporters in the Republic of Ireland as well as in Northern Ireland. . . . The situation bears more than one similarity to that of the Palestinians and the Israelis—the dilemma of how to satisfy the contradictory and exclusive, though equally legitimate, aspirations of two communities. Unfortunately, there is no Solomon in sight.

II: The Jacobin Heritage and Democracy

A phenomenon of inverse symmetry: the evolution of the great European Communist parties (in Italy, France, and Spain) has taken the very opposite direction from that of the terrorists. As extremist groups step up the violence of their tactics, the Communists draw closer to the methods and programs of the traditional democratic parties. If the revisionist Eduard Bernstein were still alive, he would rub his hands with glee at some of the public statements Berlinguer and Carrillo have made.

There has been no lack of critics to denounce the policy of the Eurocommunists as a decoy, a maneuver of the same sort as the Popular Front and the "outstretched hand" of Stalin's day. No question, opportunistic tactics play a fairly

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large role in the positions taken by the Eurocommunists. But there is something else involved, something of greater importance. Eurocommunism has been an attempt on the part of its leaders to respond to the social and historical changes that have taken place on the continent over the last 30 years. It is a moment in a long and tortuous process of revision and criticism that began long ago and has not yet ended.

The origins of this process lie in the controversies and polemics that successively tore apart the First, Second, and Third Internationals. What is being argued about today had already led, more than a century ago, to fierce disputation, although in another language and from other perspectives, between Marx and Bakunin, between Martov and Lenin—that is to say, among all the leaders of the workers' movement.

In the contemporary era, the process of revision and criticism was unleashed by the Khrushchev Report. For years the leaders of the Communist parties had kept Soviet realities hidden: institutional terror, the servitude of workers and peasants, the regime of privileges, the concentration camps—in a word, all those practices that Communists chastely call "violations of socialist legality." Through a moral and psychological mechanism that has yet to be described, Thorez, Togliatti, La Pasionaria, and the others not only accepted the great lie but collaborated actively in perpetuating it. The worst of it was that they managed to preserve the myth of the Soviet Union as the "homeland of the proletariat," not only in the minds of militants but also in the minds of millions of sympathizers. The spectacle of the unshakable faith of innumerable "progressivist intellectuals"—precisely those whose only profession of faith ought to be criticism, examination, and doubt!—was no less scandalous.

But after the Khrushchev Report it was no longer possible to keep the truth under wraps.

In the beginning the criticism tended to be along moral lines, and this was followed by historical, political, and economic criticism. The task of demolishing an edifice of lies that has stood for more than half a century has not yet come to an end. As always happens, there were intellectuals—among them many Communists—who began the critical examination. It is plain that without the action of leftist intellectuals the evolution of the European Communist parties would have been impossible. Thanks to them, the lies of some 10 or 15 years ago cannot be repeated with impunity today (this attitude stands in sharp contrast to that in Latin America, where so many intellectuals do not open their mouths except to recite catechisms drafted in Havana).

The criticism of the Western intellectuals was effective—unlike the reception given such earlier critics as Serge, Ciliga, Souvarine, Breton, Camus, Silone, Howe, and others—because, almost at the same time, the world discovered the existence of a dissident movement in the Soviet Union. This movement is an oddity in that it is not restricted to a single current: the plurality of tendencies and philosophies that characterized pre-Bolshevik Russia reappears among the dissidents. What is most significant is that Marxists are a minority within the movement.

Other circumstances that accelerated the evolution of the European Communist parties were the Russian occupation of Czechoslovakia, the occupation of Afghanistan, and the humiliation of Poland. These were sudden moves that, after the bloody intervention in Hungary, were well-nigh intolerable to the European left. The Sino-Soviet conflict was proof that "proletarian internationalism" is a mask for nationalist aggression; the invasion of Czechoslovakia and the repression in Poland confirm that the interests of the Russian state do not coincide with the interests of the working class or with socialism. The European working class and its leftist intellectuals have taken Russian foreign policy as a double offense: to their socialist feelings and to their nationalist feelings.

The leaders of the Communist parties have tried their best to adapt their ideology and tactics to the realities of the new Europe. It is the Italians and the Spaniards who have gone furthest. In the French party the Stalinist heritage weighs heavily in the balance and pro-Sovietism continues to be *de rigueur*. Why did French socialists, who can look back on many a bitter experience of Communist about-face,

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decide to govern as "common partners" with them? A holdover of Jacobinism or a Machiavellian maneuver to immobilize them? If the former, it is most regrettable. If the latter, it is a naive trap that will ensnare no one but the Socialists themselves. If circumstances so require, Georges Marchais and the French CP will not hesitate to break off the alliance as they have done before.[2]

Communists look upon ideological tendencies akin to their own with rage: socialists of every shade, anarchists, labor parties. Not only have they always attacked them, but whenever they have been in a position to do so they have actually persecuted and exterminated them. This characteristic, and the propensity to divide itself and subdivide itself into sects and factions, are proof that communism is not really a political party but a religious order animated by an exclusivist orthodoxy. In the mind of Communists, other parties do not exist, save as groups of individuals who must be either converted or eliminated. For Communists, alliance means annexation, and anyone who keeps his independence becomes a heretic and an enemy. Italian Communists, it is true, speak of a "historic compromise," a term that implies alliance not only with the other labor parties but with the middle class as well, bourgeois liberals included.

We may nonetheless allow ourselves to wonder whether the policy of the Italian Communists would be the same if there existed in Italy a strong Socialist party such as that in France or Spain.

The most spectacular reform has been the abandonment of the dogma of "the dictatorship of the proletariat." On this point, it is useful to distinguish between dictatorship of the proletariat and dictatorship of the Communist party. Marx put forward the former as a basic tenet, not the latter. According to the original conception of Marx and Engels, during the transition period leading to socialism, power was to be in the hands of the various revolutionary workers' parties. But in the "socialist" countries of today, the Communist minority exercises, in the name of the proletariat, a total dictatorship over all classes and social groups, including the proletariat itself.

The abandonment of the notion of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" has been yet another sign that the European left, not excluding the Communists, is finally beginning to retrieve its other tradition. Not the one that stems from Rousseau's "general will," the mask of tyranny and the intellectual origin of Jacobinism and Marxism-Leninism, but the libertarian, pluralist, and democratic one, founded on a respect for minorities.

Despite the importance of the changes that have taken place in the Communist parties of Italy and Spain, they have not yet fully evolved. The European Communist parties—the French one in particular—continue to be closed groups, at once religious and military orders. The truth is that, if the goal is to return to the true socialist tradition, there is a twofold moral and political prerequisite that must be satisfied. It is necessary, first, to break with the myth of a socialist Soviet Union and, second, to establish internal democracy within Communist parties. This latter condition means revising the Leninist tradition at its very roots. If Communist parties wish to cease being religious and military orders so that they may become genuine political parties, they must begin by practicing democracy at home and denouncing tyrants wherever they may be, in Chile or in Vietnam, in Cuba or in Iran.[3]

My critique of the European Communist parties should not be regarded as an attempt to exculpate the other parties. They all are more interested in reaching power or remaining in power than in shaping the future. No idea of change inspires them, nor do they represent anything new in the history of this century. Their idea of movement is the in-and-out of office holding, the shuffling of cabinet posts: politics as a game of musical chairs.

I am not unaware that the leaders of the

[2] They actually did so in 1984.

[3] The failure to achieve a thoroughgoing and truly democratic reform of their structures explains the progressive and, in my opinion, irreversible decline of the French and Spanish Communist parties. Marxism-Leninism is no longer a European ideology; it has become a political and military catechism of the revolutionary elite of the less developed countries, such as Nicaragua and Ethiopia.

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liberal democracies have been skillful and efficient, and that they have resolved many conflicts and problems in a civilized manner. Their countries have great material, technical, and intellectual resources to draw on; they have resisted the old imperial temptation and have tended to these resources carefully. But at the same time they have not known how, or have not wanted, to use their riches and their technical knowledge for the benefit of poor and economically underdeveloped countries. This has been disastrous, since these countries, in Asia and Africa as in the Americas, have been and will be focuses of disturbances and conflicts.

But if Western leaders have not been generous as well as prudent, neither have they committed great excesses. None of them has acted as a bloodthirsty despot, and all of them have endeavored to respect minorities as well as the majority. The leaders' great errors and misdeeds have taken the form, rather, of sexual or financial scandals. They have exercised power—or opposition—with moderation and relative intelligence.

This picture would be incomplete if I did not add that the politics of these Western leaders have been the politics of complacency, of the easy way out. Idolaters of the status quo and specialists in the art of wheeling and dealing, they have displayed precisely the same weakness of will in the face of the incredible selfishness of the masses and the elites of their countries as in the face of the threats and blackmail of foreign countries. Their vision of history is that of trade, and it is for this reason that they have seen in Islam not a world awakening but a client to be bargained with. Their policy toward Russia—I am thinking not only of social democrats such as Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt but also of conservatives such as Valéry Giscard d'Estaing—has been and is a gigantic self-deception. The essential thing has been to wriggle out of difficult situations, assure oneself of another year of tranquil digestion, and win the next election. There is a disproportion—I don't know whether to call it comic or tragic—between this slippered ease and the decisions that the present demands.

Nonetheless, it would not be fair to fail to acknowledge the great benefits that workers and the middle class have attained in the last 40 years. These gains are owed, above all, to the labor unions and to the action of social democratic and labor parties. To these causes must be added, as a basic economic condition, the extraordinary productive capacity of modern industrial societies and, as a no less basic social and political condition, the democracy that has allowed the struggle and the negotiation between capitalists and workers, and between both and governments, to take place. Productive capacity, free labor unions, the right to strike, the power to negotiate: this is what has made the Western democracies viable and prosperous.

How much longer will the governments of the West be able to assure their peoples that they will enjoy this well-being that, though it may be neither happiness nor wisdom, has been and is a sort of placid contentment based on work and consumption? As the economic crisis worsens, there will be less work, fewer things to buy, and less money with which to buy them. The magnitude of the problems with which we of the 20th century are confronted stands in sharp contrast to the modesty of the programs and solutions put before us by the governments and political parties of Western Europe.

Some people will surely remind me, not without reason, that politics is an art (or a technique) that lives and moves and has its being in the relativity of the immediate and the proximate. The political leaders of antiquity, too, were not able, save in rare instances, to predict the future: they hit upon the right solution because they knew how to answer the challenge of the moment, not because they were able to see into the future. That is true, but we live at a crossroads of history, and Europe is the great absentee in world politics.

The decline of European influence cannot be attributed solely to its political leaders' lack of political imagination or boldness. Following World War II, the nations of the Old World withdrew into themselves, and since then have devoted their immense energies to creating a prosperity without grandeur and cultivating a hedonism without passion and without risks. The last great attempt to regain lost influence was made by General de Gaulle. With him

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ended a tradition that even in his own day, and despite his powerful personality, was an archaism. It was simply not possible for France, by itself, in its new secondary rank on the world scene, to reestablish the international balance of power and act as a counterweight to the United States and Russia—a role that could only be filled by the combined forces of a united Europe. But this possibility never really played a part in General de Gaulle's vision, for two reasons: first, because he was a profoundly nationalistic political leader and, second, because his great intelligence was in no way incompatible with a goodly share of realism.

De Gaulle knew what we all know: the nations of Europe want to live together and prosper in peace, but they do not want to do anything in common. The one thing that unites them is their passivity in the face of destiny. Hence the fascination exerted on their peoples by pacifism, not as a revolutionary doctrine but as a negative ideology. This is the other face of terrorism: two contrary expressions of the same nihilism.

In the last few years we have witnessed the electoral triumph of democratic socialism in Spain, France, and Greece. These victories bear within them lessons that should be pondered by all Latin Americans, especially those who are democrats and socialists. The case of Spain is especially pertinent. Spaniards and we Hispano-Americans have confronted the same obstacles in our attempts to implant democratic institutions in our lands. I shall not deal at length with this subject: it is a familiar theme and I, too, have discussed it in a number of my writings.

The history of Spain and of Hispano-America over the last two centuries has given me occasion to doubt more than once whether democracy is viable in our case. Yet Spain today, after 40 years of dictatorship, is beginning to live a democratic life that is in many respects exemplary. The first lesson here, above all for our obtuse, barbarian oligarchies ever in search of an imposing brass hat to guarantee order: if Spaniards have managed to live together peacefully and democratically, why can't we do it? The second lesson is of particular concern to the Latin-American left, dogmatic and stubborn-minded, descended not from the Enlightenment but from the theologians of the 16th century: the PSOE, the Spanish Socialist Workers' party [Spain's Socialist party], has not merely renounced Marxism but has willingly gone along with the democratic rotation of parties and power. Perhaps in view of the example of Spain, our own political leaders, both conservative and radical, will learn to practice tolerance, accept criticism, and respect the opinion of others.

The pragmatism of the democratic parties, especially the social democrats, has positive aspects, virtues that become visible in the light of the critiques of revolutionaries. If we reread today the polemic between Karl Kautsky and the Bolsheviks, we are most likely to side with Kautsky: his position vis-à-vis the Communist dictatorship is not very different from that of Enrico Berlinguer's and Santiago Carrillo's today. Yet the name of this German Marxist has been coupled for half a century now with Lenin's damning epithet: Kautsky the Renegade. His case is akin to that of Julian, the Roman emperor in the tradition of Marcus Aurelius (and a valiant warrior), who through the work of his Christian enemies is known today as Julian the Apostate.

There is no doubt that socialists and social democrats have ceased to be revolutionaries. Have they not thereby proved that they possess a more acute historical sensibility than their dogmatic critics? The absence of proletarian revolutions in Europe has proved the central prophecy of Marxism to be false. But are today's European Communist parties revolutionary? Abandoning revolutionary rhetoric is a sign not only of intellectual sobriety but also of political honesty.

Since the last years of the 19th century, we have lived the myth of Revolution, as the men of the first Christian generations lived the myth of the End of the World and the imminent Second Coming of Christ. I confess that as the years go by I view revolt with more sympathy than I do revolution. The former is a spontaneous and almost invariably legitimate uprising against an unjust power. The cult of revolution is one of the expressions of modern excess—an excess that at bottom is an act of compensation for an inner weakness and a lack.

We seek from revolution what our elders

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sought from religion: salvation, paradise. Our era turned gods and angels out of heaven, but it inherited from Christianity the age-old promise to change humankind. From the 18th century on, it was thought that this change would consist of a superhuman, though not a supernatural, task: the revolutionary transformation of society. This transformation, like the grace of old, would make men and women *other*.

The failure of the revolutions of the 20th century has been tremendous and is quite evident. Perhaps the Modern Age has been guilty of a terrible confusion: it has tried to make of politics a universal science. It has been believed that revolution, once it became a universal science, would be the key to history, the open-Sesame that would break down the doors of the prison in which humanity has lived since its very beginnings. We now know that this key has not unlocked a single prison door: instead, it has locked many.

The conversion of revolutionary politics into a universal science capable of changing humanity was a transformation of an essentially religious type. But politics is not, nor can it be, anything other than a practice and, at times, an art: its sphere is immediate, contingent reality. Nor has science (or, more exactly, have the sciences) ever proposed to change humanity: only to know it and, if such a thing can be possible, to cure it, to better it. Neither politics nor the sciences can bring us paradise or eternal harmony. Hence to turn revolutionary politics into a universal science was to pervert both politics and science, to make of them a caricature of religion.

Today we are paying for this confusion in blood. The pragmatism of social democracy, its gradual loss of the radicalism and the vision of justice that had inspired it in the beginning, can be seen as a reaction against the excesses and the crimes of authoritarian and dogmatic "socialism." This reaction has been salutary; at the same time, social democracy has been unable to fill the vacuum left by the failure of the great Communist hope. Does this mean, as many predict, that the hour of the churches has come? If this should turn out to be the case, I hope that there will be left on the earth at least a small handful of human beings—as at the end of antiquity—who will resist the temptation of divine omniscience, as others, in our day, have resisted that of revolutionary omniscience.

Translated from the Spanish by HELEN LANE □

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Gordon Adams

Why There is No Arms Control

And in Washington, an Interplay of Policy and Gossip

In 1972, the United States and the Soviet Union implemented agreements limiting anti-ballistic missile defense and intercontinental ballistic missiles. That year, the U.S. had roughly 5,700 strategic nuclear warheads, 1,054 ICBMs, 656 SLCMs, and 463 strategic bombers. The Soviet Union had 2,160 strategic warheads, 1,527 ICBMs, 497 SLBMs, and 140 strategic bombers.

Now, 12 years later, arms control talks have come, gone, and come again; agreements have been signed, and the United States has not yet ratified a single new arms-control agreement. The arsenals, however, have changed. By the end of 1984, the U.S. had 9,000 strategic nuclear warheads, 1,045 ICBMs, 568 SLCMs, and 328 strategic bombers. New U.S. strategic weapons plans included 2 new land-based ballistic missiles (MX and Midgetman), a new sea-launched ballistic missile (the Trident II or D–5), 3 versions of a low-flying cruise missile (sea-, land-, and air-launched), 2 new bombers (B–1 and Stealth), a whole new generation of new nuclear warheads, and a "Star Wars" antimissile system in space.

Soviet nuclear forces included 7,000 strategic nuclear warheads, 1,400 ICBMs, 980 SLBMs, and 350 strategic bombers. Soviet plans included at least two new ICBMs, (SS–X –24 and –25), and a new SLBM (SS–NX–23), a new strategic bomber (Blackjack), cruise missiles, and hunter-killer satellites. And 12 years of talks have brought the world more nuclear arms and less security. Real arms control seems scarcely to have been tried since 1972. Strategic policy-makers on both sides dream and calculate, seeking the next advantage and the "ultimate system" that will end the race or give one side an upper hand. What goes on inside this strange world of arms control, occupying so much time, talent, and energy, while accomplishing so little?

In his recent book,* Strobe Talbott takes us inside this world, so far inside that he, too, almost loses sight of the subject—the nuclear arms race itself. It is a fascinating, personality-laden and revealing journey into this world. Once inside, it becomes clear why arms-control choices are so few, the range is so narrow, and the progress so slow.

In the strategic-policy community, the arguments are not really about arms control but about power in Washington, D.C. Was Al Haig truly in charge, that mercurial secretary of state for whom being in charge was as important as the substance of policy? Does Richard Perle, Defense Department Svengali, go to meetings to impose his power and does he avoid them with the same end in mind? And does Richard Burt hide proposals he has negotiated with one bureaucrat, in order to slip them past others?

As portrayed by Talbott, arms-control policy is really gossip. Washington is the capital of gossip—a small town masquerading as center of global power. Nuclear strategy and arms-control policy are especially susceptible to inside stories and personal idiosyncrasies. The players who pretend to know about nuclear war and have access to the secrets are few in number. Information is highly classified and the arguments are arcane—a hypothetical theology resembling world-class chess, with pieces nobody wants to move.

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* *Deadly Gambits: The Reagan Administration and the Stalemate in Nuclear Arms Control*, by Strobe Talbott (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984).

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Nuclear policy is also susceptible to personal idiosyncrasies because nuclear war has no history. Such a war has never happened; no general has ever fought one. Thus White House and State Department civilians can imagine they know as much about nuclear war, the arms race, and deterrence as anyone in uniform. Since ignorance is distributed equally, anyone with access to secrets can play.

There is, first of all, the top. President Reagan emerges as a "reluctant and uninformed arbiter," who didn't know that the vast majority of Soviet nuclear warheads are on the land-based missiles the U.S. wanted to dismantle, who thought bombers and sea-launched ballistic missiles didn't carry nuclear warheads and that the latter could be recalled. Properly informed, Reagan probably wouldn't continue to believe any of this. It does betray, however, a general presidential ignorance of nuclear issues, which means other players have real power to define policy.

Reagan's isolation from policy makes the "war of the two Richards"—Burt (State Department) versus Perle (Defense Department)—an important part of the frame. Richard I ("soft") appears to seek an arms-control proposal that the Soviets will at least want to talk about. Richard II ("hard") seems to want no proposal at all or, at best, one the Soviets will reject out of hand.

In reality, both Richards are "hard." Both support arms-control proposals that would permit the Defense Department to proceed with its entire nuclear buildup, and to punish the Soviet Union for having a large nuclear arsenal by demanding that some of it be destroyed. The initial U.S. negotiating position for START, for example, completely protected the MX and Trident D–5 missiles, while calling on the Soviet Union to dismantle two-thirds of its most modern, multiple-warhead ICBMs.

Secretary of Defense Weinberger looks to Perle for guidance on arms-control policy. Weinberger's position is hard-line, and he loves land-based missiles (including the MX). Paul Nitze, negotiator in the failed Euromissile talks, was scorned by most of the players for "wandering off the reservation" (trying to explore what the Soviets might really accept). He has reemerged in the 1985 round of talks as a crucial adviser to Secretary of State George Shultz.

Nobody seemed to trust Shultz's predecessor, Al Haig, if Talbott is to be believed. The succession at State led to high (and misleading) hopes, which may be instructive today:

> There was a widespread assumption inside the government and out, heavily tinged with wishful thinking, that one morning Reagan and the country would wake up and find themselves with a more traditional, middle of the road foreign policy, including a more negotiable set of arms control positions. And it would all be thanks to Shultz.

Still another player emerges as central to what little progress was made between 1981 and 1983 in defining U.S. policy on arms control: Robert McFarlane, the national security adviser. McFarlane is one of those policymakers who avoid publicity but are omnipresent. According to Talbott, the government could only define a negotiating position for START because McFarlane and Burt agreed on it, end-running Perle's opposition.

It would then seem that a meaningful arms-control proposal could only emerge from this Administration if it had the support of Shultz, Nitze, Burt, and McFarlane. The Joint Chiefs of Staff are also critical. Talbott notes that the chiefs have regularly been more supportive of arms control (as part of strategic policy) than Pentagon civilians have been.

No wonder the U.S. delegation to Geneva in January 1985 had so many participants clamoring for a voice! Of course, a major weakness of "White House-ology" is that one has to start the explanation all over again when new players enter the game. Neither Max Kampelman (new delegation chief) nor former Senator John Tower (strategic arms negotiator) rate a mention in Talbott's book. INF negotiator Maynard Glitman rates four mentions, only one of them remotely substantive (Richard Allen, then national security adviser, described Glitman as a "utility infielder").

The problem with this gossip framework is that policy itself becomes secondary. Talbott notes, at the very end of the book, that three

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years of gossip and in-fighting on arms control had produced, at best, a mouse: "The substance of policy remained largely undefined." This is a crucial reality—the stalemate of personalities in the Reagan administration means *no policy*. In fact, as the Administration began to prepare for a 1985 round of talks, *New York Times* reporter Leslie Gelb noted that the substance of arms-control policy was explicitly removed from everyone's bureaucratic agenda.

There are other reasons, beyond personalities, why substantive arms-control policies are avoided by the Reagan administration. While Talbott does not explicitly lay out the deeper sources of this stalemate, much of the evidence lurks in his pages. This Administration has brought into office a group of policy-makers who almost universally see the Soviet Union as aggressive, overarmed, dangerous, and deceitful. While Talbott (and perhaps a few players in the Administration) realize that the Soviets are strongly motivated by the need to be recognized as equal to the United States, U.S. policy seems designed to deny them such acceptance, even in form. All U.S. arms-control proposals from 1981 to 1983 sought to reverse the Soviets' strategic buildup, while permitting the U.S. to carry out its own plans.

Moreover, in this Administration arms control and U.S. military spending plans are closely tied together. Reagan came into office committed to what has become the most rapid peacetime expansion of military spending in American history (even higher in constant dollars than it was during the Korean or Vietnam wars).

In describing the evolution of the U.S. position in START, Talbott notes that "the Administration's principal concern was to keep military programs on track." This was (and remains) true for the MX missile program: "By making the MX a bargaining chip in START, the Administration could put Congress in the position of not daring to end the program." This is especially true for the latest strategic technology—Star Wars. The struggle in the Administration between "bargaining chips" and "defense programs" is crucial to selling the Reagan military buildup to Congress. As with MIRV technology (multiple warheads on missiles) and cruise missiles before it, Star Wars is advertised as a bargaining chip, but it is likely to remain as a military program. Such military programs consistently end up as all chips and no bargain.

For those who want the chips, calling them a bargain is crucial to selling the budget. Supporters of arms control in the Congress have tried to turn this reality to their own purposes. Rep. Les Aspin (D–Wis.), new chair of the House Armed Services Committee, sought this kind of leverage when he engineered the 1983–84 campaign to save the MX. For such members as Aspin and Senator Al Gore (D–Tenn.), congressional progress in weapons programs was held hostage to progress on arms control in the White House.

To an extent, this strategy has worked. As Talbott notes, the Administration's START proposals were influenced by members of Congress who were seeking a more negotiable position. This political strategy carries a high price, however, since it permits the next generation of nuclear weapons to emerge while arms-control progress is, at best, slow.

Technology is another reason for the Reagan administration's reluctance about arms control. One motor of the nuclear arms race is pressure from defense contractors and research labs to develop the next generation of strategic technology. Progress in technology is marketed as a kind of arms control and solution to the arms race. *Somehow* the next generation of weaponry will bring security, make us safe or put us "over the top." U.S. MIRVs emerged from this rationale, and the Soviets copied them. MIRVs are now seen as the biggest threat to U.S. land-based missiles, and Richard Perle, according to Talbott, is busy trying to put the MIRV genie back into the bottle. The same is true of cruise missiles. They were first sold as a bargaining chip and a safer weapon, and they have been deployed in growing numbers. The Soviets followed suit, presenting us with Soviet long-range, sea-launched cruise missiles based off the American coast. The technology that seemed to be the solution is now part of a bigger problem.

Star Wars is the latest candidate for technology as pseudo arms control. Talbott pays little

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attention to Star Wars—a mistake. Star Wars is real, though not in the way the White House has described it. The Administration has worked overtime to sell Star Wars as an alternative to the arms race—a blanket over the United States defending us from Soviet missiles. Technologically, this is absurd, as even the program's supporters acknowledge. Star Wars might be real, however, as an integral part of an offensive strategy. The goal of Star Wars is to protect missiles, not people. Land-based and space-based missile-defense systems (rockets, high-energy lasers, and particle beams) are being designed as an integral part of nuclear war-fighting strategy.

Why protect our missiles? Optimists would say: so we can ensure that a Soviet first strike cannot wipe out U.S. land-based missiles. Pessimists would answer: so that if the U.S. should fire first, the Soviets will realize they cannot retaliate successfully. Whether for second-strike or first-strike goals, Star Wars is being developed as part of the strategy for fighting a "limited nuclear war," the next stage of the nuclear arms race. Not only might the Soviet Union be tempted to strike before such a missile defense is operational; its most likely response would be an unprecedented expansion of nuclear warheads in order to overwhelm such a system. Star Wars takes both countries to the next and more dangerous level of nuclear insecurity.

Technologies such as MIRV, cruise missiles, and Star Wars do not generally emerge from the Pentagon. When it comes to technology and new weapons, other players enter the strategic game, though Talbott does not describe them. Government laboratories (in the Star Wars case Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore), and contractors (Lockheed, Rockwell, BDM Corp., Science Applications, among others) are a far more important source of new weapons than the Pentagon. Labs and contractors develop a stake in the arms race. They lobby Congress and the Pentagon, provide inside advice in the early stages of a program, help design it, and hire the Pentagon officials who have promoted it. These research and development contractors are key players in the "iron triangle" (Pentagon, Congress, and the contractors) that is an important crucible of the arms race—and a key obstacle to progress on arms control.

The last cause of the slow progress on arms control is the very concept of deterrence itself. The Reagan administration is now infamous for the language of "protracted nuclear conflict," in which U.S. policy is to "prevail." The idea of a ladder of nuclear escalation, however, far predates the Reagan administration. Reagan administration officials are simply wrong when they contrast their policy of deterrence with something called "MAD." Mutual Assured Destruction has been dead for more than a decade. The new arms technologies drove armchair nuclear strategists into thinking about limited nuclear war in the 1960s. These technologies appeared to promise greater accuracy, invisibility, greater range and speed, and enhanced survivability, all of which propelled strategists down the road of counterforce targeting, war-fighting, and protracted nuclear conflict.

For the nuclear fraternity, these developments meant enhanced deterrence, a more refined deterrence. As long as the U.S. could demonstrate that it was capable of nuclear war *at all levels of nuclear combat*, involving every type of nuclear weapon, the Soviet Union would be deterred at each level. As technology made new levels of conflict seem possible, we had to develop them, or the Soviets would do so, thereby checkmating us.

This "refined deterrence" is the intellectual

dissent

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logic driving the Reagan (and, in reality, most Democratic strategists') policy. The flaw in this logic is that the race never ends, and as it proceeds it becomes ever less stable. The Soviets match us, step-by-step, and both sides are left with more destructive power and less security.

As we move closer to imagining we can fight the protracted nuclear conflict we wish to deter, the temptation grows to use the weapons (or to strike at the adversary to prevent first use against us). Once the war we hope is protracted begins, the outcome is uncertain, unpredictable, and deadly.

It is precisely the deadly outcome of this apparent logic and the massive buildup sustained by it that has led to the public's demands, here, in Western Europe, and, one may safely presume, in the realm of the Soviet Union to search for some alternative to the nuclear arms race.

Because Talbott has chosen to focus on policy as gossip, he misses what is probably the most important piece of the arms control landscape: the changed public mood, the public's increasing involvement in the policy debate, and the fact that such involvement has widened the range of possible policy alternatives. Simply because the Reagan policy-makers reject the idea of a bilateral nuclear freeze, and negotiator Ed Rowny bats it away with a piece of paper when the Soviets seek to discuss it, this proposal will not cease to exist. Precisely because nuclear strategy is a theoretical (albeit dangerous) exercise—and (to use Anderson's fairy-tale image) we find the emperors of arms control now indeed quite naked—Congress and the public have begun to enter the debate in growing numbers. Over the past five years, the "iron triangle" of nuclear policy-making has become a lot less closed.

Talbott tends to dismiss the public debate and the alternatives it presents as a sideshow or an "externality"—something that helped push the Administration into negotiations but doesn't really count in the policy arena. The major flaw of the book is its underlying tone, suggesting that the issues debated among Perle, Burt, Nitze, and the others are the real agenda—that, for instance, deterrence is eroding because of the Soviet nuclear buildup, the Pershing II missiles are needed to deter Soviet SS-20s, and "modernization" (next-generation) nuclear weapons programs must proceed. The nuclear agenda, however, is far wider, and it is unlikely to narrow down in the future.

When the Administration argues that all programs in the military budget require funds because they are "bargaining chips," Congress and the public may be expected to demand evidence of real progress in the talks, proof that chips really are being traded and that the Administration's proposal is truly negotiable.

If the Administration demands new weapons to "strengthen our hand," it will hear from Congress and the public that our hand is already strong—the current triad of ICBMs, SLCMs, and bombers has been and remains a large, powerful, and credible deterrent. And if the Administration argues that the Soviet Union is building and developing weapons that violate treaties (one of which, SALT II, the U.S. never ratified) and endanger our deterrent, it will hear from the public that a verifiable freeze might make us more secure. A freeze, among other benefits, might end Soviet MIRVs, halt new missile developments in Siberia, and prohibit deployment of additional Soviet ballistic missiles off our coasts that threaten our ICBMs. If the Administration says the MX and Star Wars are bargaining chips, the public and Congress may respond by declaring a moratorium on funding for these programs, look for a Soviet response, and watch for proof that the Administration intends to actually trade them as part of the process of getting meaningful concessions from the Soviets.

Because the arms-control game has become infinitely more dangerous, it is now being played on a wider field than Talbott acknowledges. New, unexpected players, among the public and in Congress, are pushing the process along. The range of alternative policies is much broader than the narrow, sterile debate and personality stalemate he describes. The goal of this bigger game is security, ours and that of the world around us. □

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Steven Lukes

The Future of British Socialism?

In 1932 R. H. Tawney published an article in which he reflected upon the events of the previous year: the collapse of the Labour government and the massive electoral defeat of the Labour party in which it lost 235 seats, with 30.8 percent of the polls and 52 seats as against the National government's 67.2 percent and 554 seats. Tawney called his article "The Choice Before the Labour Party." The party, he declared, needed "a little cold realism" now it had "an interval in which to meditate on its errors." His verdict on the late government was "pernicious anaemia producing general futility."[1]

In 1984 we can look back on an electoral defeat that is, if less dramatic, more catastrophic.[2] Now, if ever, there is a need for "cold realism" and meditation upon past errors. The verdict this time can only be suicidal self-absorption producing general noncredibility.

Indeed, the question must now be asked: *Is* there a choice before the Labour party? If there is, what, if any, are the party's prospects? And what, if any, are the prospects for socialism in Britain over the next decades? And what are the links between these? Despite the massive changes in the social and economic landscape, and even in the Labour party, it is still worth going back to Tawney's essay as a reference point in seeking to address these questions. I do so because I agree with Anthony Wright that it is "possible that it is Tawney rather than Trotsky who has more to contribute" to contemporary arguments within the Labour Party,[3] and further that, as he argues in the essay he contributed to *Fabian Essays on Socialist Thought*, "Tawneyism provides the materials for an assault on Thatcherism" and for an escape from the current harsh and cold climate of ideas.

It might, of course, seem widely optimistic to propose Tawney's 1932 essay as a reference point for discussion, since it might conjure up the prospect of a future Labour majority on the scale of 1945 (presumably without the benefit of another world war).[4] In current circumstances, on the left, it would seem that a pessimist is a well-informed optimist. If a pessimist is someone without illusions in a tough world, then we had better all be pessimists. Thus, for example, we had better reject the notion that all the Labour party needs is a period of further bleeding to cure it of its surfeit of crypto-Social Democrats and thereby turn it "into a socialist party free from the constrictions hitherto imposed upon it by its leaders"[5]; or that it is basically healthy and only needs a period of time to recuperate under its bright, new leadership; or that, though its condition is probably terminal, the "future of the left lies in the consolidation of a new strength outside Parliament," in "the support and encouragement of factory occupations, peace campaigns, black struggles, and women's resistance."[6] Being pessimists, however, does not mean that we should be fatalists.

Consider, first, Tawney's very title: "The Choice Before the Labour Party." There are various ways of looking at the Labour party of 1929–31. One view is that it was just *unable* to rise to the demands of the time—for example, because of its "commitment to a utopian social-

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ism that incapacitated it from effectively working the parliamentary system and prevented it from coming to terms with economic reality"[7]; or, alternatively, because it was enmeshed in "labourism." Another view is that there was no such *opportunity*: the Labour party "could not . . . reorganize economic life through state intervention" because of deficient understanding, lack of theory, the physical incapacity of the state, and the opposition of "the bureaucracy, the Bank of England, the banks, the great financial institutions, most of industry," and "the dead weight of conventional wisdom."[8]

Tawney, by contrast, took the view, as did many socialists at the time,[9] that there were lessons to be learned from 1931, choices to be faced, and alternative paths to be pursued—though it is true that as the 1930s progressed, the Labour party had made no significant break with the past.[10] An analogous range of views exists today. On one view, the Labour party could never be a vehicle for socialism: "cart-horses," Ralph Miliband once wrote, "should not be expected to win the Derby."[11] On another point of view, increasingly advanced on the right, at different levels of sophistication, the socialist project is, for a variety of reasons, inherently unrealizable or only realizable at an unacceptable cost. Certainly, anyone disposed to dispute both views must offer a detailed defense of his own against some powerful current counterarguments.

For Tawney, the choice was clear-cut. The Labour party could either be "a political agent, pressing in Parliament the claims of different groups of wage-earners," or "an instrument for the establishment of a socialist commonwealth, which alone, on its own principles, would meet those claims effectively, but would not meet them at once." But "it cannot be both at the same time in the same measure." If it continued to be the first, with programs that were more "miscellanies" than programs, offering "the greatest possible number of carrots to the greatest possible number of donkeys," then it would continue to lack a "stable standard of political values, such as would teach it to discriminate between the relative urgencies of different objectives." Lacking such a standard, it "lacks also the ability to subordinate the claims of this section of the movement or that to the progress of the whole, and to throw its whole weight against the central positions." In short, it lacked "any ordered conception of its task."

Labour's fundamental weakness, according to Tawney, was "its lack of a creed." The Labour party was "hesitant in action, because divided in mind. It does not achieve what it could, because it does not know what it wants." Being

> without clear convictions as to its own meaning and purpose, it is deprived of the dynamic which only convictions supply. If it neither acts with decision nor inspires others so to act, the principal reason is that it is itself undecided.

This weakness was fundamental:

> If it continues uncorrected, there neither is, nor ought to be, a future for the Labour Party. A political creed, it need hardly be said, is neither a system of transcendental doctrine nor a code of rigid formulae. It is a common conception of the ends of political action, and of the means of achieving them, based on a common view of the life proper to human beings, and of the steps required at any moment more nearly to attain it.

Why did Tawney believe that such an energizing creed was a possibility that could be *chosen*? Because he did not believe that the interests of its actual and potential electorate were independent, given facts to which the party must simply respond. On the contrary, he held that until

> the void in the mind of the Labour party is filled—till interests are hammered by principles into a serviceable tool, which is what interests should be, and a steady will for a new social order takes the place of mild yearnings to make somewhat more comfortable terms with the social order of today—mere repairs to the engines will produce little but disillusionment.
>
> [For] the dynamic of any living movement is to be found, not merely in interests, but in principles, which unite men whose personal interests may be poles asunder, and . . . if principles are to exercise their appeal, they must be frankly stated.

It was, of course, objected that, by taking such a course, the Labour party would alienate many of its supporters:

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> It may, for the time being; New Models are not made by being all things to all men. But it will keep those worth keeping. And those retained will gather others, of a kind [that] will not turn back in the day of battle.

This raised the question of attitude or (a word he liked) "spirit," which Tawney's essay both exemplifies and describes. "If there is the right spirit in the movement," he wrote, "there will not be any question of the next Labour government repeating the policy of office at all costs, which was followed by the last." The Labour party, he wrote, must put essentials before sectional claims, and it must create "a body of men and women who, whether trade unionists or intellectuals, put socialism first, and whose creed carries conviction, because they live in accordance with it." When socialists come to power, they must do so, not "as diffident agents of policies not their own, but as socialists." They must have created, before they assume office, a strong body of opinion, which "knows what it fights for, and loves what it knows." The party must "create in advance a temper and mentality of a kind to carry it through, not one crisis, but a series of crises." Instead, it has

> drugged itself with the illusion that, by adding one to one, it would achieve the millennium, without the painful necessity of clarifying its mind, disciplining its appetites, and training for a tough wrestle with established powers and property. It touched lightly on its objectives, or veiled them in the radiant ambiguity of the word socialism, which each hearer could interpret to his taste. So it ended by forgetting the reason for its existence. It has now to rediscover it.

What, then, was the objective of a socialist party? The answer, Tawney said, was "simplicity itself":

> The fundamental question, as always, is: Who is to be master? Is the reality behind the decorous drapery of political democracy to continue to be the economic power wielded by a few thousand—or, if that be preferred, a few hundred thousand—bankers, industrialists, and landowners? Or shall a serious effort be made—as serious, for example, as was made, for other purposes, during the war—to create organs through which the nation can control, in cooperation with other nations, its own economic destinies; plan its business as it deems most conducive to the general well-being; override, for the sake of economic efficiency, the obstruction of vested interests; and distribute the product of its labours in accordance with some generally recognized principles of justice? Capitalist parties presumably accept the first alternative. A socialist party chooses the second. The nature of its business is determined by its choice.

That business was

> not the passage of a series of reforms in the interests of different sections of the working classes. It is to abolish all advantages and disabilities which have their source, not in differences of personal quality, but in disparities of wealth, opportunity, social position, and economic power. It is, in short—it is absurd that at this time of day the statement should be necessary—a classless society.

Those who accept this objective, Tawney observed, may do so for more than one reason:

> because they think it more conducive to economic efficiency than a capitalism which no longer, as in its prime, delivers the goods; or merely because they have an eccentric prejudice in treating men as men; or, since the reasons are not necessarily inconsistent, for both reasons at once. In either case, they are socialists, though on matters of technique and procedure they may be uninstructed socialists. Those who do not accept it are not socialists, though they may be as wise as Solon and as virtuous as Aristides. Socialism, thus defined, will be unpleasant, of course, to some persons professing it. Who promised them pleasure?

A future socialist government must "apply to the affairs of its own country the principles which, it believes, should govern those of the world," aiming to extend the area of economic life controlled by some rational conception of the common good, not by a scramble, whether of persons, classes, or nations, for individual power and profit.

IN SUM, TAWNEY'S ESSAY carries three lessons that are strikingly and urgently relevant to the present day.

• The first is *antifatalism*. Of course, choices cannot be willed or conjured into existence whatever the objective circumstances. Nevertheless, Tawney's antifatalism provides a valu-

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able antidote to a certain kind of electoral determinism that has prevailed in Labour party debates ever since the 1950s, when the Revisionists embraced the *embourgoisement* thesis and especially since the postmortems on the 1959 election. It was then widely held that Labour's traditional working-class base was threatened by affluence.[12] Today the opposite case is advanced: because of deindustrialization and the current recession, the proletariat is disappearing, as traditional proletarian occupations decline. Or it is argued, as by Eric Hobsbawm, that increasing sectionalism and public-sector employment in the working class has halted the "forward march of labor."[13] Or labor support is said to be doomed by long-term social-demographic trends.[14] Common to all such arguments is the assumption that "interests" on which the Labour party essentially relies are fatally withering away. But, as Gareth Stedman Jones has well said, "the 'objective' realities of class discerned by social surveys and sociological analysis do not have any unambiguous bearing upon the fate of class-oriented political parties."[15] And indeed, as Tawney shrewdly observed, the Labour party is "less of a class party than any other British party." It has indeed always relied upon substantial sectors of the middle class for support to achieve majority governments.

Fatalism, however, extends far beyond the perennial analyses of Labour's prospects; it appears to have bitten deep into the electorate itself. The evidence from public opinion and voting studies seems to suggest that Britain's apparently intractable economic problems have led to quiet disillusionment: people increasingly assume that widespread inequalities are unalterable and the economy is beyond human control.[16] With such sentiments Thatcherism is peculiarly at home, and it has sought to nurture and breed them, while attempting to root out the very idea that social progress can be achieved through the rational exercise of political will. In this it has been outstandingly successful, propagating a fatalistic creed (the Hayekian canon banishes the very notion of social justice, seeking to replace a sense of injustice by the recognition of necessity, in the form of ill luck). In the face of such triumphant fatalism, the only option is, as Tawney proposed, "to seize every opportunity of forcing a battle on fundamental questions." The only potentially effective means of resisting, and eventually rolling back, the present tide is to develop and propagate an alternative analysis of the present that reaches to fundamentals, and a vision of an alternative future of a "society of go-getters" that is both appealing and feasible. This is the only way, if there is one, to stir and mobilize the deep and partly submerged countercurrents of our social and cultural life.

• The second lesson concerns what we may call the *spirit of socialism*. For such a battle, Tawney writes, there needs to be "a body of conviction as resolute and informed as the opposition in front of it"—a set of attitudes free of class hatred and aware that "both duty and prudence require that necessary changes be effected without a breakdown," and that "the possibility of effecting them is conditioned by international, as much as by domestic, factors."

What Tawney illustrates is something that has been all too rare in the history of the labor movement and has never been more needed than today: "moralism" with "a hard cutting edge" that makes "connections between moral valuations and social institutions with direct consequences for political practice."[17] These consequences lie at different levels. One example, and not a trivial one, concerns personal life style. If Labour leaders "accept titles and other such toys, without a clear duty to the movement to do so," writes Tawney, "[they] widen the rift between its principles and practice, [for] livery and an independent mind go ill together." In any case, "how can followers be Ironsides if leaders are flunkies?"

More generally, an "ordered conception of its task" would enable the party to cut a path through the jungle of conflicting sectional claims and, in particular, to abandon its disastrous, self-defeating support for "free collective bargaining." It would encourage it to grasp the nettle of an effective incomes policy, instead of avoiding it, as in the last election campaign. Such support and avoidance can buy political allies and achieve famous victories (as over the Heath government). But

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they have proved to be pyrrhic (as the Callaghan government discovered), and they demonstrate beyond any question the party's lack of any "stable standard of political values" and "ordered conception of its task." For a real and effective incomes policy (such as the left *used* to advocate) is the only alternative to unemployment as a means of controlling inflation.[18] Achieving such control has long been a major preoccupation of the population at large. If a will and a way cannot be found to commit the unions to an effective incomes policy, within the Labour party (the Social Democrats have a will, but no way), then not only will the prevailing fatalism about the inevitability of large-scale unemployment prove amply justified, but the Labour party will finally show itself to be unserious about the pursuit of the socialist objective.

• Third, and finally, this leads us to Tawney's account of the *socialist objective* itself. His statement of this is an admirably clear, coherent, and compelling statement of essentials that still captures much of what distinguishes a socialist from a liberal perspective (and socialists from our Social Democrats anxious to purloin the mantle of Tawney's name and legacy). As Wright observes (in *Fabian Essays in Socialist Thought*), Tawney's "discussion of equality in terms of equal worth and social solidarity has different foundations from a liberal approach concerned with identifying the criteria of 'fairness' and 'social justice.'" It centers upon the notion of social unity based upon common ends and shared values—what Anne Phillips (in *Fabian Essays*, and in the Winter 1985 *Dissent*) calls the "social" in socialism—and is indeed fully vulnerable to her admirable critique (in its "eccentric prejudice in treating men as men"). It is true that it lacks a critical sense of the varied forms of solidarity and the conflicts between these. Nor does Tawney grapple with the relations between solidarity, pluralism, and individuality. These are urgent tasks for socialist political theory. But his account does register a clear sense of what socialist solidarity is not—the "scramble . . . for individual power and profit [and the] tyranny of money"—and it forms, I believe, as good a starting point as any for building a socialist (as against a liberal or social-democratic) theory of justice.

Of course, it needs reformulating and rethinking in the light both of new, or newly visible, forms of oppression, injustice, and unfreedom, and of new social movements with new vocabularies and concerns. It must also grapple, as Peter Kellner argues (in *Fabian Essays*), with the problem of reconciling the community's good with that of preserving, indeed expanding, the role of voluntary transactions within it: exactly *when* should market forces operate and how should they be constrained and guided?

In essentials, however, Tawney's essay still offers broad guidelines for reshaping the Labour party's "common conception of its task," after the deforming and dispiriting years, under Wilson and Callaghan, of pragmatic capitulation. ("They threw themselves into the role of the Obsequious Apprentice, or Prudence Rewarded, as though bent on proving that, so far from being different from other governments, His Majesty's Labour government could rival the most respectable of them in cautious conventionality.") It embodies a vision that is neither "distributionist" nor "productionist," but both together. ("It is not a question, of course, either of merely improving the distribution of wealth, or merely increasing its production, but of doing both together.")[19] It is neither what is currently called "libertarian" nor "collectivist," in the manner of the Webbs, nor cautiously social-democratic, but begins to inject a distinctively socialist content into basic values central to (some of) our traditions, such as liberty, democracy, equal opportunity, justice and, indeed, solidarity. Kellner (in *Fabian Essays*) is right: it *is*

> a measure of the Tories' ideological ascendancy that they have so successfully clothed the pursuit of privilege in the rhetoric of democracy—and a measure of Labour's retreat that our opposition in the name of fairness and decency should be so widely construed as an assault on liberty.

If we are to move "beyond the fragments," one prerequisite is a coherent scheme of socialist principles, to order priorities and unify adherents—"a body of conviction as resolute and informed as the opposition in front of it." It was needed in the 1930s and it is needed today.

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II

Yet the world of today is one that has been radically transformed since Tawney wrote, and the scale and dimensions of this transformation must be understood and faced.

Tawney could plausibly analyze his world in time-honored and well-tried categories. Thus he could write of the "economic power [of] bankers, industrialists, and land-owners," of overcoming the "vested interests" they imposed in the way of a socialist distribution, and that

> class-privilege takes more than one form. It is both economic and social. It rests on functionless property, on the control of key positions in finance and industry, on educational inequalities, on the mere precariousness of proletarian existence, which prevents its victims looking before and after.

But this is a world we have lost, just as the Labour party Tawney addressed was the Labour party of yesterday. Economic power, vested interests, class privilege, and class oppression seemed (whether to Marxists or Fabians) clearly identifiable, as did the agency that would bring them to an end (whether it be revolutionary workers or rational professionals). It was a world in which Britain still played an independent world role and its social structure rested upon the central geological fault of the distinction between manual and mental labor. In this world, the organized working class had "the consciousness of an estate with definite interests to defend and advance within the existing polity," through the trade union movement, while the consciousness of the professional classes was "the ethic of service, of intelligence, and expertise, in pursuit of humanitarian ends, of a civilizing mission both at home and abroad." Trade unionism was "the vehicle of the poor and the underprivileged," while "the self-esteem of the old professional middle class"—experts, teachers, scientists, doctors, civil servants, preachers—"stemmed from their sense of difference from the working class and of helping the labor movement from an unassailed privileged position."[20] The Labour party expressed and represented this alliance, which culminated triumphantly in 1945. Tawney, from one point of view, may be seen as its finest and most articulate exponent. But since the 1950s, the parties to this alliance have largely fragmented, and their unifying forms of class consciousness largely dissolved—while the Labour party has ceased to function as its natural embodiment (uniting workers of "hand and brain") combining the largely defensive interests of the working class with the evangelical, Christian-based conscience of the middle classes, under the acknowledged leadership of the latter.

Furthermore, it is unhelpful to speak of resuming "the forward march of labor, which began to falter 30 years ago"[21]—as though the problem were to continue a (once magnificent) journey across territory that, though it may have been substantially transformed by various new developments, is still recognizable by the old familiar landmarks. It is not enough to take note of the "changes in British capitalism" (the rise of mass production and the concentration of production units, the growth of monopoly capitalism and the public sector, the political determination of the capitalist market and the massive rise in workers' living standards) and the "changes within the working class" (the influx of women workers and immigrants, and the growth of divisive sectional struggles) in order to explain why "common working-class interests" have failed to prevail and why the movement "in the right general direction" seems "to have got stuck," and to conclude that we are today (quoting Hobsbawm once more):

> in a period of world crisis for capitalism, and, more specifically, of the crisis—one might almost say the breakdown—of the British capitalist society, at a moment when the working class and its movement should be in a clear position to provide a clear alternative and to lead British peoples toward it.

Rather than resuming the "forward march," the problem is now one of drawing up new maps, of regrouping the army and recruiting new forces. (Indeed, the very metaphor of a "forward march" will have to be abandoned. It never really fitted anyway, and it derived from an antiquated kind of military campaign based on the poor bloody infantry.)

For the truth is that the class structure has

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radically changed over the last decades, becoming both more complex and more obscure; that in consequence the parties to the old Labour alliance have fragmented in various cross-cutting, ambiguous, and contradictory ways; and that the complementary forms of class consciousness on which that alliance depended (the defense of unambiguous and shared collective interests allied with a middle-class humanitarian conscience) have all but dissolved.

There have been massive changes in the nature of both capital and labor.[22] This has occurred within the context of an increasingly international economy, now dominated by international corporations, in which they have been restructuring the international division of labor, directing capital-intensive production, research and development to areas of high labor productivity and the best markets, and labor-intensive production to the Third World: as a result, Britain's economic decline, unemployment in skilled and semiskilled occupations, and deindustrialization have been accelerated. The changes in capital have been in the direction of ever more complex forms of ownership and control, rendering them ever more difficult to perceive and make sense of. It is no longer a question of Tawney's few thousand or few hundred thousand "bankers, industrialists, and land-owners," but of pension funds, multinational corporations, cartels, "spheres of interest," and so on. Economic power and vested interests have become less and less representable: capitalism now lacks not so much a human face as a human form.

As for the changes in labor, these have resulted from sectoral shifts in the economy between industries and from the restructuring and reorganization of labor within them.[23] Here the most notable effects have been the massive growth and diversification in the service sector, deskilling and white-collar proletarianization, and the increasing feminization of work. (Anne Phillips draws attention to this in her essay in *Fabian Essays* and the Winter 1985 *Dissent*.) Furthermore, the deindustrialization and shedding of labor in the current recession has accentuated the division between those in work and the unemployed and underemployed. It is no longer a question of "the mere precariousness of proletarian existence," but increasingly the precariousness of existing outside the proletariat—outside work and the organized working class.

AMONG ALL THESE DEVELOPMENTS, a number are particularly worth stressing. *First*, economic power has become more anonymous and invisible. *Second*, the contours of the occupational structure have become more difficult to discern. *Third*, the traditional image of the proletarian—as "male, manual, and muscular" (in David Lockwood's happy phrase)—is becoming increasingly inapplicable to the industrial scene. *Fourth*, the very distinction between manual and nonmanual labor is less and less relevant. *Fifth*, indeed labor or work itself, and the sphere of production, seems to be becoming less central to the identity and consciousness of workers, while consumption, especially with respect to housing and transport, has become more central to the definition of their basic interests.[24] A new dividing line, between home owners and others, now cuts across older, fading class divisions, fragmenting the working class by dividing those with a stake in the financial and property markets from those dependent on state provision, and significantly affecting voting patterns, to the progressive disadvantage of the Labour party, given its current policies. Consumption patterns increasingly shape and reflect how people view their interests, their reference groups, the welfare state, and the Labour party. *Sixth*, those in employment, including the professional classes, have turned more and more to sectional distributional conflicts, exploiting their differential market situations and organizational resources to the full—a trend only increased under inflationary conditions, albeit tempered by recession. *Seventh*, the poor and the underprivileged are now to be found more and more outside the organized working class and the trade union bargaining process—among the unemployed, the unwaged, colored immigrants, and one-parent families.

Finally, there appears to have been a reactive growth (encouraged by the combination of recession and inflation) of instrumental, pecuniary, egoistic, in short, capitalist values and attitudes, and a disintegration of various moral

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frameworks within which these had a subordinate place and faced various countervailing forms of commitment, loyalty, and discipline —whether based on unionism, locality, or class. In part, these frameworks have been withering away as the industrial, urban, and social structure changes. In part, more recently, they are being stripped away in a systematic, ruthless, and manipulative political onslaught on the organizations of the working class and the institutions of local government. In part, too, this has occurred because of the very successes of the welfare state and of Labour in power. For when Tawney wrote, the "mere precariousness of proletarian existence" gave the ties of solidarity and community a clear instrumental point: the workplace, the union, the neighborhood, the extended family, the Labour party were vital means of defending, and advancing, shared interests in a hostile and uncertain world. Universal welfare provision, however inadequate and maladministered, has removed that context, further weakening the bonds of communal solidarity. In short, the moral background to the cash nexus may be fading away,[25] leaving us morally unencumbered in what Tawney, in his forthright way, called an "acquisitive society."

III

If this is the world we live in, how, then, are the lessons of Tawney to be applied to it? Is it possible today to be antifatalist? Is it feasible to live by and to spread the spirit of socialism? How should the socialist objective be framed and pursued?

Certainly, the socialist project confronts some formidable obstacles in present-day Britain. Facing them with "cold realism" carries several implications.

First, our social analysis must endeavor to grasp these hard realities, unencumbered by wishful and anachronistic notions of class and class structure. It must take seriously the consumption-related interests of people whose loyalties have already been alienated by the Labour party's historically laudable single-minded commitment to state provision. It must accordingly begin to distinguish between capitalism and the market principle, and between different types of markets.[26] It must also address other forms of domination and powerlessness, injustice and unfreedom than the exploitative wage relation, and particularly those rightly associated in the public mind with socialism and the Labour party, such as the relation between welfare bureaucracies and their clients.

Second, there must be a renewal of the socialist educational tradition, in which Tawney, and the Fabians generally, played such a central part. There must be a massive effort to make the increasingly opaque and complex processes and relations to which I have alluded more widely intelligible to those caught up within them. This is partly a matter of fiercely campaigning against the cumulative and growing inequalities within the formal education system (in the 1990s there is likely to be a smaller proportion of working-class children at universities than in the 1970s[27]) and resisting at every point the current drive to sharpen these. Within the curriculum the battle against orthodoxy and establishment-mindedness must be waged with new vigor: where are the radical and critical history books for primary schoolchildren? And the systematic, though selective, onslaught on social science, and sociology in particular, by the present government and opinion leaders friendly to it must be taken especially seriously. Here is a major area in which the old Fabian tradition of research, of "measurement and publicity," must be continued and renewed. It is also a question of returning to the innovative educational traditions of the past outside the formal system. But it is no longer mainly in miners' lodges, the Workers' Educational Association, and Ruskin College that such renewal will be found, but in the use of the media—both at the national (television, a national labor newspaper) and at local levels—through the creative participatory use of new technology, above all videos, whose democratic possibilities can now only be glimpsed. Socialist education must awaken after its long, comfortable sleep.

Third, we must finally cast off the belief, shared by both the Fabian and the Marxist components of the British socialist tradition, that, whatever its setbacks, capitalist development somehow naturally culminates in socialism. This is not just a question of rejecting an

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antique, falsely reassuring evolutionary optimism, the Whig history of the left. In part, as I have suggested, the very pursuit of socialist objectives has made them less widely appealing and less easily attainable. It is also a matter of taking antifatalism seriously, looking hard to see how and where capitalism can be *socialized* —by diffusing the ownership and control of capital, both personal and industrial, and to discover what forms the "organs through which the nation can control, in cooperation with other nations, its own economic destinies" can take in the contemporary world of internationally imposed inequalities. The dominating and growing role of multinationals makes this task all the more urgent and difficult, and all the more scandalous the Labour party's relative traditional disinterest in the socialist parties and movements beyond our shores, and especially on the European continent.

Fourth, we should welcome, rather than regret, the passing of "consensus politics." This was a form of politics within which socialist advance was never going to prove possible. Now there has been a clearing of the decks, and we should see this as an opportunity to rediscover and redefine a "common conception of the ends of political action, and of the means of achieving them, based on a common view of the life proper to human beings, and of the steps required at any moment more nearly to attain it."

Fifth, among these steps must be the immensely difficult business of forging alliances between potential constituencies, building outward from the Labour party's shrunken base and upon various forms of solidarity, including those based on local and urban communities, regionalism, ethnicity, and social movements. In this process, particular attention should be paid to the rejuvenation of local democracy—a central Fabian concern since the Webbs, much neglected by the Labour party in recent times. For it is at the local and regional level that powerlessness and inequality are most resented and have grown most dramatically. Unemployment and deprivation, poor public services, the "Thatchervilles" of inner cities, inadequate housing and transport, high crime rates, unsatisfactory policing—on such issues successful campaigning can be mounted, as part of the necessary task of seeking interests that may be "harnessed by principles into a serviceable tool" to build a new social order.

Finally, we need to rethink and restate those principles in a way that will evoke a response from people who are justifiably skeptical of the socialist record (while in countless unacknowledged ways its beneficiaries) and of the Labour party's claims to their allegiance, but for whom the available alternatives offer bleak prospects indeed. And we must do so with the driving purpose of recovering and mobilizing a latent antifatalistic consensus of sentiment and belief: a sense of outrage and of justice, and a belief in the centrality of welfare rights to citizenship and of political will to social progress. This was the battle the Fabians fought. For a time it seemed to have been won. It has not. Now we must take it up all over again, with no certainty of victory.

Notes

[1] R. H. Tawney, "The Choice Before the Labour Party," *Political Quarterly* 3, 1932, pp. 323–45. All quotations from Tawney, unless otherwise indicated, are from this essay.

[2] See D. Massey, "The Contours of Victory . . . Dimensions of Defeat," *Marxism Today*, July 1983. See also E. Hobsbawm, "Labour's Lost Million," *Marxism Today*, October 1983.

[3] A. Wright (ed.), *British Socialism: Socialist Thought from the 1880s to 1960s* (London: Longman, 1983), p. 13.

[4] See I. Crewe, "How to Link Up and Pick Up Vital Seats," *Guardian*, March 23, 1984.

[5] R. Miliband, "Socialist Advance in Britain," in R. Miliband and J. Saville (eds.), *The Socialist Register 1983* (London: Merlin Press, 1983), p. 116. Miliband holds that "whether the activists can . . . achieve the conquest of the Labour Party is more open than I had believed" (p. 117).

[6] D. Coates, "The Labour Party and the Future of the Left," in Miliband and Saville (eds.), p. 100.

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[7] R. Skidelsky, *Politicians and the Slump. The Labour Government of 1929–1931* (London: Macmillan, 1967), p. xii.

[8] R. McKibbin, "The Economic Policy of the Second Labour Government 1929–1931," *Past and Present* 68, 1975.

[9] See R. Eatwell and A. Wright, "Labour and the Lessons of 1931," *History* 63, 1978.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 51, but see also Ben Pimlott, *Labour and the Left in the 1930s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), and Elizabeth Durbin's essay in *Fabian Essays in Socialist Thought*.

[11] R. Miliband, "The Labour Government and Beyond," in Miliband and Saville (eds.), *The Socialist Register 1966* (London: Merlin Press, 1966), p. 23.

[12] For example, see M. Abrams and R. Rose, *Must Labour Lose?* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960).

[13] E. Hobsbawm, *The Forward March of Labour Halted*. Edited by M. Jacques and F. Mulhern (London: Verso, in association with *Marxism Today*, 1981).

[14] See Crewe, *Guardian*, art. cit.

[15] G. Stedman Jones, "Why Is the Labour Party in a Mess?" in his *Languages of Class* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 242.

[16] See H. Newby, C. Vogler, D. Rose, and G. Marshall, "From Class Structure to Class Action: British Working Class Politics in the 1980s," forthcoming. I have greatly benefited from reading this excellent analysis, on which much in the next section of this article draws. For further evidence on fatalism see J. Alt, *The Politics of Economic Decline* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

[17] A. Wright, *British Socialism*, p. 13.

[18] See W. Beckerman, "A New Realism," *New Statesman*, December 2, 1983.

[19] To this quote from Tawney's essay (p. 333), compare Neil Kinnock's characterization of "democratic socialism as a *productionist* philosophy": "My Socialism," *New Statesman*, October 7, 1983.

[20] G. Stedman Jones, *art. cit.*

[21] Hobsbawm, "The Forward March of Labour Halted," p. 18.

[22] See Newby *et al.*, *art. cit.*, and the references cited therein.

[23] See E. O. Wright and J. Singleman, "Proletarianization in Advanced Capitalist Societies: An Empirical Investigation into the Debate Between Marxist and Post-Industrialist Theorists over the Transformation of the Labor Process (Mimeo, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin, 1978).

[24] See J. Westergaard, "Class of '84," *New Socialist*, Jan/Feb., 1984. See also Newby *et al*, *art. cit.*

[25] See J. Westergaard, "The Rediscovery of the Cash Nexus," in R. Miliband and J. Saville (eds.), *The Socialist Register 1970* (London: The Merlin Press, 1970).

[26] On this intriguing question see, for example, C. E. Lindblom, *Politics and Markets: The World's Political-Economic Systems* (New York: Basic Books, 1977); A. Clayre (ed.), *The Political Economy of Cooperation and Participation: A Third Sector* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980); also see Alec Nove, *The Economics of Feasible Socialism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1983).

[27] As Gareth Williams suggests in the *Times Higher Education Supplement*, March 30, 1984. See also *Democratic Trends and Future University Candidates* (London: Royal Society, 1984). □

Latest News from China?

The policies introduced by Lenin in 1921 were new in that they broke sharply with the extremist measures and coercive ideas of the civil war. They gave birth to the first dual economy in the history of Communist movements, combining a public and private sector, socialist aspirations and capitalist practices, plan and market. The Soviet state retained control of heavy industry, foreign trade, banking, and transportation. But lesser enterprises were denationalized, the principle of private peasant farming reaffirmed, and market relations, which had been suppressed during the civil war, restored.

NEP brought also a new, more conciliatory politics. The Communist party maintained its dictatorship, but the Soviet party-state of the 1920s was limited and relatively tolerant, allowing a greater degree of social, cultural, and intellectual pluralism than has ever existed since in that country. As in economic life, the excesses of statism and coercion were deplored. Social harmony and class collaboration, rather than strife and terror, became the principles of NEP. The Soviet 1920s were neither democratic nor, in our sense, liberal. But when Stalin unleashed a virtual civil war against the peasantry and the private sector in 1929, repudiating NEP as "rotten liberalism," he destroyed a model of Communist politics and economics that many citizens would long remember as the "golden era" in Soviet history and in which, decades later, Communist reformers in the U.S.S.R., Eastern Europe, and elsewhere would find a lost alternative to Stalinism.

— From Stephen F. Cohen, *Rethinking the Soviet Experience, Politics and History Since 1917*, Oxford University Press, 1985 □

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Ellen Israel Rosen

The New Bedford Rape Trial

New Thoughts on an Old Problem

One evening in March 1983, after giving her three-year-old daughter a birthday party, a New Bedford, Massachusetts woman left her two children with their father and walked to a neighborhood bar to buy cigarettes. According to her story, she bought the cigarettes, had a drink, and was chatting with another woman, when a group of men threw her on a pool table and collaborated in raping her. Others in the bar observed what happened, and allegedly encouraged the rapists in their sexual assault. Apparently no one interfered or called the police.

The victim escaped, reported the events to the police, and identified her assailants. A year later, six men had been arrested and were brought to trial for aggravated rape, a crime that carries with it a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. Their trial, known as the "Big Dan's" rape trial, gained national attention.

Why did this event, which took place in an obscure New England working-class community, capture the attention of the media and become a national scandal? Was it the particularly brutal nature of this rape—the collaboration of six men, while others looked on cheering? Or because it was a precedent-breaking conviction? Finally, why did so many in the Portuguese community (including women and church leaders) vigorously support their accused countrymen—even after four were found guilty? Many Portuguese became active in the men's defense, seeing the arrests and trials as expressions of discrimination against their entire community.

I am not convinced that the New Bedford rape trial made its way into the *New York Times* simply as a result of its unique brutality. No doubt, dramatic sexual violence is often seen as newsworthy. Unfortunately, rapes like this one are not as unusual as one might think. In the months of February, March, and April 1984, when the New Bedford trial took place, the *Boston Globe* alone reported three other comparable assaults for which men had been arrested. Yet these events were not picked up by the national media. Many reported rapes are gang rapes; but few capture so much public attention.

If the brutality of the Big Dan's rape was not unique, neither was the trial a precedent-breaking event. It was an earlier trial, several years before, that had provided the landmark case in which rapists were finally convicted after years of tacitly being excused. At that time, three physicians were convicted of raping a nurse. This conviction demonstrated that the abuse of masculine power could no longer be tolerated with impunity. The medical community disowned the perpetrators, underscoring the brutality of what they did.

The Big Dan's trial, however, was not merely about the abuse of masculine power. In fact, the trial obscured the male-female issue. Not only did it raise questions about definitions of women's "consent" in a sexual act; it left the public wondering about the bizarre community response. The case became a national story, not only because of its sensationalism, its brutality, or its defense of women's rights, but because it evoked some profound and unarticulated social questions about the conflicting claims of class, ethnicity, and gender in our society.

The trial itself was certainly a victory for women. The ground rules enforced by the court recognized as legitimate contemporary femi-

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nists' claims that rape occurs whenever a woman withholds her full consent from sexual activity. The jury was instructed to find the defendants guilty if the prosecution proved sexual activity had occurred without the woman's consent. Given the "new rules" (and there is no doubt that there are now new rules), consent cannot be assumed even if there is evidence that a woman behaved seductively. Nor can her sexual reputation be used as evidence of tacit sexual compliance.

The verdicts show that the belief in a woman's right to say "no" is no longer limited to a small coterie of feminists. But if the verdicts and the sentencing were a feminist victory, the events surrounding the trial also raised the specter of ethnic prejudice, complicating what was initially a simpler question of male violence against a woman. The defendants were working-class and unemployed immigrants, themselves potential victims. The protests provoked a latent fear that the arrests and trial, while taking place in support of women's rights, might also express social prejudice against working-class, immigrant men. This ultimately generated concerns about whether "underdogs" get a fair shake. It evoked the memory of countless bogus Southern trials in which accusations of rape against black men have resulted in lynchings.

What sparked the claim by recent Portuguese immigrants that justice could not be done here in court was a series of hostile phone calls made by "natives" to a local radio talk show. These calls were broadcast, indicating "a widespread outpouring of anti-Portuguese feeling" and "demanding that all Portuguese be shipped back to Europe" (*New York Times,* February 6, 1984). These radio programs heightened tensions between the "natives" and the Portuguese immigrants in New Bedford.

As this local conflict captured the attention of the media, national publicity intensified the local conflict. Further, the courts became alerted to the potential hazards of public hysteria in swaying the outcome of the trial. Subsequently, every effort was made to ensure that verdicts would not be made in a lynch-mob atmosphere.

Two separate trials were held to ensure that the defendants would not incriminate each other by their testimony. Jury selection was undertaken in ways to make sure the defendants would be tried by an unbiased cross section of public opinion. A *Boston Globe* article describing the process of jury selection cited the defense attorney's claim that this was "one of the most exhaustive searches for a jury in Massachusetts history" (*Boston Globe,* February 9, 1984). The same reporter saw the selection process as representing "a cross section of citizens . . . " (*Boston Globe,* February 8, 1984). The final juries included 22 men and 10 women. Many of the jurors were working-class. Half the jurors had Portuguese surnames (*Boston Globe,* February 22, 23, 1984).

Given this serious attempt to keep public hysteria from influencing the outcome, it seems to me that justice was done. The jury was instructed to find the defendants guilty if sexual penetration was deemed to have taken place without the victim's consent. "Consent" is the key word. Feminists have challenged traditional notions of sexual consent in recent years, arguing that there is never a sexually provocative act on a woman's part that warrants penetration without her full consent. Legally this may become a quagmire; yet given my own feminist sympathies (and without wanting to get into legal debate here), such an approach seems a good rule of thumb to follow in rape trials, and it does not mean that verdicts will be a response to feminist "hysteria." In this case, the jury found the men guilty because they saw evidence of rape. Nor were the verdicts a result of ethnic prejudice. The district attorney, the prosecutor, and the victim were all of Portuguese descent.

The men got a fair trial. Yet the episode made a national event out of the latent hostility that exists in southeastern Massachusetts toward the new Portuguese immigrants. The trial was broadcast live on cable TV, thrusting this relatively obscure ethnic group into the national spotlight. Some of the immigrants interviewed by the media said that the daily proceedings had become "a spectacle," a public "indictment of the entire community" (*New York Times,* March 17, 1984). Until the Big Dan's trial, few Americans knew of the large

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Portuguese community in New Bedford. Today the town evokes instant recognition, especially after one journalist needlessly called it "the Portuguese gang-rape capital of the country" (*Hustler Magazine,* cited in the *Boston Globe,* October 16, 1984).

Southeastern Massachusetts towns have been the home of Portuguese immigrants for more than 100 years. Between 40 and 60 percent of the population in New Bedford, a town of 98,000, are of Portuguese descent. Since the 1960s, when immigration laws were changed to permit the entry of more Portuguese, these communities have incorporated thousands of newcomers, largely landless peasants from the Azores. Many have arrived in this country with as little as four years of schooling, and they now live here among their relatives and work in declining manufacturing industries. The Portuguese are typically two-wage families. Women work in garment shops while the men become fishermen (a traditional occupation in the Azores), or construction or factory workers. For most of them, wages are low and unemployment is high.

The Portuguese have a political tradition of arbitrary and authoritarian government, controlled by the landed upper class and industrialists. As a defense against the capricious wielding of power in the Azores, they tend to be extremely apolitical and family-oriented.* In the U.S., they remain fearful and mistrustful of government. Many saw the public notoriety brought on by the trial as a threat to their political status in America. Hearing that the accused could be deported if convicted, some became nervous about their own chances for citizenship. Others worried that future immigration of family members from the Azores might be jeopardized. Ironically, this traditionally apolitical community was galvanized into what it saw as political action in its own defense.

To this end two groups were formed in the Portuguese community to organize around the defense of the accused and to monitor expressions of prejudice during the trial. The Committee for Justice reported that it was generally satisfied that justice was being done in the courtroom, though both the Committee for Justice and the Portuguese-American Defense League were critical of the press.

While the Committee for Justice could find no evidence of anti-Portuguese prejudice in the courtroom, the Portuguese community nevertheless continued to publicly support the accused. After the first of the two "guilty" verdicts, they organized a demonstration of 15,000 to declare the innocence of the convicted men. The community's defense riveted the public's attention on the Portuguese. Indeed, if anything could be designed to cast the Portuguese community in a bad light, it was this apparently bizarre protest.

Darlene Wheeler of the New Bedford Coalition Against Sexist Violence, a local feminist group, expressed the confusion of those outside the immigrant community when she told the *Boston Globe* (March 19, 1984),

> There is a feeling that the verdict is on them as a community and they seem to have failed to separate their ethnic background from the charges. They have lost sight of what the crime was.

Why did the Portuguese community find itself in the unenviable position of upholding its moral legitimacy by appearing to defend rape?

The stance of the Portuguese community cannot be understood simply by reference to a generic "Latin machismo." Although the Portuguese share a macho ethic with other Latin cultures, their fierce family loyalty and strict patriarchal attitudes resemble the values of the Sicilian peasants who came to America in the early 1900s rather than those of contemporary Hispanic immigrants.

In a culture that distances itself from political authority, fathers and husbands embody almost total authority at home, controlling both the labor and virtue of women and children. Contemporary observers are amazed at the women's apparent docility and submissiveness.

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* See Rita Moniz, "The Portuguese of New Bedford, Massachusetts and Providence, Rhode Island: A Comparative Microanalysis of Political Attitudes and Behavior" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Political Science, Brown University, 1979).

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Portuguese wives and mothers often work full time in the declining garment shops and wire plants of Fall River and New Bedford, perform virtually all the housework and child care, and dutifully hand over their weekly earnings to their husbands. Portuguese fathers see no problem in removing reluctant daughters from high school once they turn 16, and sending them to work to help provide for the family. Marriages of immigrant daughters to Azorean men are still arranged by the parents, and unmarried daughters are carefully chaperoned.

Inevitably, there is resistance and rebellion

Gus Tyler

The Centennial of Norman Thomas

These remarks were delivered in New York on November 17, 1984, at the celebration of Norman Thomas's centennial. — Eds.

I should like to argue with Norman Thomas who, I will assume, is present *in absentia*. As Irving Howe said earlier, in Norman Thomas's later years, this celebrated socialist leader concluded that his career had been a failure. So I say to you, Norman, if that's the way you feel, it is not the first time you've been wrong.

I claim the right to quarrel with Norman now because I believe that no one in this room quarreled more with him than I did. In all the years that I worked with Norman Thomas, I never felt that his brand of socialism was mine. To me, the socialist movement was composed of three major strains. There were the utopian socialists, whose modern incarnation was the League for Industrial Democracy. There were the Christian socialists, whose approach was embodied in Norman Thomas. And then there were the "scientific socialists," like me.

Why were we "scientific?" Mainly because Karl Marx said that we were. "Scientific socialism" was a kind of Newtonian physics applied to the social realm. If you knew the mass and calculated the momentum and determined the direction, you would be able to predict exactly what would happen at some future time. To us, the mass was the working class; the momentum was "the movement"; the direction was socialism.

The class struggle was as inherent in capitalism as the law of gravity in the universe. The class struggle was not somebody's idea, it was a pure-and-simple fact of life.

To "scientific socialists," socialism was inevitable, arising instinctively from the struggle of an oppressed class against its oppressors. Unlike the utopians, we did not start by arguing that socialism was a more desirable system—although we did believe that, too—but by pointing to the forces inherent in capitalism that would provide the necessary dynamic to put the proletariat in power. The fact that socialism was intellectually desirable—more efficient, egalitarian—was a fringe benefit.

Nor was our starting point a dedication to some universal ethic, like that of the Christian socialists. The fact that socialism might be seen as an extension of a Judeo-Christian ethic was not repugnant to us; but ethics per se was not and could not be our point of departure. "What ethic?" We would ask. "A bourgeois ethic or a proletarian ethic?" To us Marxists, ethics did not spring into being from a vacuum and hence could not be a thing unto itself independent of the society, the times, or the classes from which it issued.

We did not then, in the first instance, address ourselves to "the head," as the utopians did with their socially engineered planning. Nor did we address ourselves fundamentally to "the heart," as did the Christian socialists. We addressed ourselves to the "hands," to those people who were not uncommonly referred to as "hired hands." To us, these were the hands of history, the shapers of the coming commonwealth. Hence our focus was not on the exact design of the future nor on the discovery and application of some external ethic but on the "road to power." Once the proletariat took over, all else would follow.

In those days I looked upon the League for Industrial Democracy as utopian in its approach. True, it did not offer grandiose all-embracing designs for social reorganization, in the style of Fourier or Saint-Simon or Robert Owen. The LID was much more modest. It would come out several times a year with fairly specific proposals on how to fix up one part of the society or another. I felt it was peddling miniutopias on the installment plan.

I did not object to this sort of exercise, a way of drawing in thoughtful citizens who had no real feel for the class struggle. But I did feel that most of the dainty blueprints were "utopian," without meaning until the proletariat took power—and we would know what to do, without consulting those social engineers and accountants at that bloodless LID.

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among the children of today's Portuguese immigrants. Yet fathers try to insulate family members from the more liberal values of the larger society, a society that, it's important to note, often has little respect for immigrant factory workers; a society that often fails to recognize how the insularity of the Portuguese community also serves as a strategy for upward mobility, which has been used by generations of working-class immigrants. With more wage-earners, and members whose activities and earnings remain in the family realm, families are able to buy homes and generate savings.

The Portuguese are aware that economic

Christian socialism—more appropriately, a Judeo-Christian socialism—was embodied in Norman Thomas. His socialism did not seem to begin with capitalism or modern times but with an ancient ethic inherent in humanity or, at least, in the human potential. Norman spoke from two "mounts." He spoke from Mount Sinai, casting "shalt nots" at the sinners against humanity. And he spoke from that other "mount" from which Jesus preached his sermon, warning the rich that they would have a hell of a time getting into heaven, promising the poor that the "meek shall inherit the earth," recalling the beatitudes with their injunction to turn the other cheek. To me, Norman was a socialist who came to his political convictions because he believed in the perfectibility of humankind and because he expected that someday His Kingdom would come on earth as it is in Heaven. His was an appeal to "the heart."

Norman Thomas did not reject the appeal to "the head," the programmatic approach to socialism. As a many-times candidate for president of the United States, he needed a platform with all the customary planks. Nor was he unaware of those "hands" out there. He identified with the struggles of the working class, throwing himself bodily and personally into the combat with fearless fury.

But the "utopian" blueprints and the class conflicts were expressions of a more profound commitment: Thomas's compulsion as the supreme pulpiteer to preach an ethic with the serene faith of the New Testament and the thunderous wrath of the Old Testament. His sermons were scintillating; but, to me, they were "unscientific."

□

Now we gather here several decades later with a chance to look back at our various views of socialism. Is there anything to be learned from a brief retrospective?

The dynamic of the class struggle is undeniable. About two-thirds of the people on this planet live under regimes that came into power in the name of the working class. Most of them openly identify with the doctrines of Karl Marx, as each regime interprets them. And in countries where working-class parties are not in control, there are influential labor movements whose presence cannot be denied. Yes, the "hands" of history continue to do their work.

But the last several generations have also taught us that power alone, even in the hands of the working class or its institutional surrogates, does not necessarily solve problems. In too many instances, the proletariat has come to power and then discovered that it did not know what to do with the power. It had power but no plans; it had its dream house but no architect; it had the will but not the way. It found that it needed planners, social engineers, technicians, who could plot miniutopias on the installment plan.

In these same decades we discovered that proletarians and their institutions—whether parties, unions, or soviets—could be as corrupt, self-seeking, and tyrannical as the bourgeoisie, the czars, or the fascists. Power could corrupt those who spoke for the working class in the same way as it corrupted those who spoke for all classes—and the more absolute the power the more absolute the corruption.

Power has to be taught and tamed by an ethic. Whether that ethic is rooted in a deity or derived from a secular humanism is secondary. But the need for an ethic that rests on respect for the dignity of every human being is primary. Indeed, without some such ethic, what is it for which our planners plan? And without an ethic, what is the ultimate purpose of the "final conflict" except another conflict, and then another?

So where does that leave us? I have decided that my socialism today is an ecumenical socialism that appeals to the hands, the head, and the heart. Here at my advanced age I publicly confess that I have come to accept that trinity. I know perfectly well that it is not arithmetically possible for three to equal one. But metaphysically, I have no difficulty.

How shall one define this metaphysical process of turning three into one? I guess you would call it "at-one-ment," making one out of many, like *e pluribus unum*. This is not an uncommon practice; we usually refer to it as "atonement," coming to terms with one's self.

So I declare this day, Norman Thomas's one-hundredth birthday anniversary, my Day of Atonement. Are you listening up there, Norman? □

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scarcity can tear families apart—as it has apparently done in America's black community. Obedience to family authority is not only viewed in the Portuguese community as morally right in an increasingly permissive society, but as a survival strategy in a community of disappearing jobs and declining wages.

The gap between mainstream American values and those of the Portuguese immigrants is wider than it has ever been between immigrants and the larger society. Teachers and social workers, many themselves children and grandchildren of earlier Portuguese settlers, often see the values of new immigrant families as anachronistic. Today women have better labor-market opportunities than ever before, and are encouraged, by the wider community, to get an education and be independent. And the sharp distinction between "good" women and "bad" women has eroded.

Portuguese immigrants see the agents of the larger society as entirely too permissive. They see the liberal, feminist social-welfare establishment as encouraging licentious behavior that thwarts the family's authority. Recent immigrants see the efforts of "Americans," including those of Portuguese descent, as attempts to denigrate their culture.

This intense clash of values largely explains the new immigrants' response to the rape. The prosecution of the six men was a message that the larger society can and will impose "establishment" standards of sexual morality on the Portuguese immigrants, and that they can be judged by standards that are inimical to them. As the immigrants saw the issue, by arresting and prosecuting the six men, the courts were insisting with the force of law that there was no longer any difference between a good woman and a whore. "The Americans," in doing so, were committing the final outrage.

The Portuguese, men and women alike, saw the victim as a "slut and a whore," someone who "got everything that was coming to her." She brazenly walked into a bar and flirted with the men. She was on welfare—bad enough in itself. But by living openly in sin with the father of the children, she was also a "welfare cheat."

As the new immigrants saw it, the victim, a woman of Portuguese descent, must have known the standards of behavior. Yet she violated the tenets of decency while the American courts punished the men who were just playing by the rules. The uncle of Virgilio Medeiros, one of the two men eventually acquitted, said of the accused, "From what I heard, it didn't seem like such a big crime" (*Boston Globe,* March 23, 1984).

The immigrants who supported the accused simply could not believe that the men's actions justified such serious punishment. As they saw it, the larger society was trashing their values in the name of a new immorality. The reportage was seen as an added insult, offering the country a view of Portuguese immigrants as condoning rape. Because the immigrants believe so strongly in the double standard, they were unable to see that the state was attempting to enforce a more progressive definition of social justice for women.

Because of feminists' efforts, the state today will intervene in family life to protect women. The fact that more men are now sent to jail for sexual assaults represents a fundamental challenge to male supremacy in the family. This hits hard at the ethos of the new Portuguese immigrants. There is no doubt that the law needs to respect the cultural difference of immigrants—but not in the case of violence against women.

The double standard, however, has been with us for thousands of years, and the new morality indeed will have to be enforced for a time before it can begin to take hold. □

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Jules Bernstein and Laurence E. Gold

Mid-Life Crisis: The NLRB at Fifty

Fifty years ago next July, Congress enacted the National Labor Relations Act, then better known as the Wagner Act after its chief sponsor, Senator Robert F. Wagner of New York. The act was termed "Labor's bill of rights," and indeed it was, declaring that American workers had a federally protected

> right to self-organization, to form, join or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and to engage in concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection.

But if labor chooses to celebrate this landmark anniversary, it will do so with anger toward the act's principal custodian, the National Labor Relations Board. AFL–CIO President Lane Kirkland recently suggested that the act be scrapped entirely, and that labor and management return to economic warfare, unprotected and unrestrained by federal law.

Why is the act's golden anniversary so bittersweet? Indeed, from the start, controversy has marked the Wagner Act and the NLRB. At times both labor and business have complained that the board was biased for one side or the other, its decisions inconsistent with the act's purposes, its doctrines insensitive to the realities of labor-management struggles. Overall, however, the NLRB has long been viewed as one of the more professional of the regulatory agencies, such as the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Federal Trade Commission, serving important public ends with infrequent sharp philosophical turns and staffed by an enduring and competent professional corps. But now labor and its allies in Congress assert that Ronald Reagan has "packed" the NLRB in management's favor to an unprecedented degree, converting it ideologically into a weapon against the labor movement. Regrettably, there is truth to these claims.

Since 1947 the NLRB has been composed of five members, each appointed for five years by the president and confirmed by the Senate. Their terms are staggered, so a seat comes up every year, and members may be reappointed indefinitely. By an unwritten rule, no more than three of the five members can be Democrats or Republicans. Of 38 appointees in 50 years, 20 have been Democrats, 16 Republicans, and 2 independents. Since Eisenhower's first appointee in 1953, however, the board has been mostly Republican—all 16 Republicans were appointed since then, joined by only 7 Democrats and 1 independent. Until the mid-1950s, NLRB members mostly came from the ranks of lawyers and economists with an occasional politician and businessman. Since then, they have all been government officials, lawyers, or both. Never has a union official or someone from the union bar been appointed to the board, but there have been several appointees from management.

The NLRB became more bipartisan after 1947, when the Taft-Hartley Act increased its membership from three to five and, more important, made major revisions in the Wagner Act: establishing, for the first time, the concept of *union* unfair labor practices, prohibiting secondary boycotts, authorizing state "right-to-work" laws (which prohibit the union shop), undermining the Wagner Act's pro-organizing, probargaining objectives. Nonetheless, subsequent boards, while hardly immune from politics or bias, were generally composed of professionals who rarely triggered strong labor or

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management opposition; now 30 years have passed since the only close Senate confirmation vote. Indeed, presidents have consulted both labor and management about prospective appointments in order to prevent confirmation battles. The board's opinions have reflected a moderate range.

Until Ronald Reagan! In contrast to all of his predecessors but Eisenhower—whose pro-business board-packing rankled labor and resulted in a series of Supreme Court rebuffs to the new board's doctrines—Reagan has reappointed none of the board members who sat when he took office in 1981, including John Fanning, a highly respected Democratic Eisenhower appointee reappointed by Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, and Carter—and Howard Jenkins, a black Republican Kennedy appointee reappointed by Johnson, Nixon, and Carter.

Reagan's first appointee, Republican Robert Hunter in 1981, was chief aide to Utah Senator Orrin Hatch, chairman of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, and helped orchestrate the mammoth employer opposition that narrowly defeated the moderate labor-proposed reforms to the National Labor Relations Act in 1978. Hunter also authored the sections on the NLRB and the Department of Labor for the right-wing Heritage Foundation's 1980 blueprint, *Mandate for Leadership: Policy Management for a Conservative Administration.*

Reagan's second appointee, in 1981, Republican John Van de Water, was a longtime California "management consultant" whose stock-in-trade was advising employers how to defeat union-organizing drives. Van de Water served only a recess appointment as NLRB chairman in 1981–82, because even Reagan's allies in the Republican Senate could not secure his confirmation—the first such rejection ever of a board nominee.

Third came Republican Donald Dotson, in 1983, the current chairman and an NLRB lawyer for five years, who later worked as a labor attorney for Westinghouse, Western Electric, and the Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corporation. As assistant-secretary of labor for labor-management relations earlier in Reagan's first term, Dotson ordered a sharp increase in government audits and investigations of unions while all but ending the Department's enforcement of reporting and disclosure requirements for employers and their "union-busting" labor-relations consultants. Reagan's most recent appointee, also in 1983, was Democrat Patricia Diaz Dennis, a relatively inexperienced labor attorney for the Pacific Lighting Corporation and the American Broadcasting Company.

As of this writing, Dotson, Hunter, and Dennis comprise the NLRB; the other two seats are vacant, including one unfilled since Jenkins's departure in August 1983. Last October, Reagan made the controversial recess appointment of Rosemary Collyer to the critical, independent position of NLRB general counsel, normally serving a four-year term following Senate confirmation. (In January 1985, Reagan again submitted her name for regular confirmation.) The board's general counsel directs over 1,100 field attorneys and examiners, who oversee union representation elections and investigate and prosecute unfair labor practices throughout the country. Collyer, a 1977 law-school graduate, practiced a smattering of management-side labor law with a large Denver general-practice firm before being plucked from obscurity in 1981 to chair the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission, where she rendered generally promanagement decisions. Though Collyer was essentially unknown, labor opposed her appointment because of her inexperience as a lawyer and in labor-management matters—unprecedented for this influential post—and because of her promanagement bias.

Reagan's triumvirate on the NLRB (with earlier assistance from Van de Water) has succeeded in imposing significant legal and administrative changes. The following is a sampling of NLRB rulings that revise or reverse well-established board law, in each case to the detriment of workers and unions.

The NLRB —

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Narrowed the fundamental concept of workers' "concerted activity"—that is, legally protected activity—by deciding that it does not

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cover an individual employee protesting unsafe working conditions (Meyers Industries, Inc., *1984);*

Made it easier for an employer to question employees about their union sympathies during organizing campaigns (Rossmore House, *1984);*

Consistently approved larger rather than smaller workplace units as appropriate for union organization, thereby rendering it much more difficult for employees in a single store, or a single part of a plant or company, or a single job classification to gain NLRB certification of their unions (Ohio Valley Supermarkets; Howard College; St. Francis Hospital, *1984);*

Held that an employer could transfer work from a union to a nonunion facility without bargaining with the union, unless the collective-bargaining agreement specifically prevents it (Milwaukee Spring Division, *1984);*

Ruled that an employer need not bargain over its decision to close an organized plant and relocate the work to a nonunion plant if the decision does not "turn" on labor costs (Otis Elevator Co., *1984);*

Declared that a union has no right to information about an employer's nonunion plant, even though it suspects that the employer is shifting bargaining unit work to the plant (Bohemia, Inc., *1984);*

Made it easier for employers to discharge strikers for their union activities by removing legal protections from purely verbal conduct, even in the heat of a strike (Clear Pine Mouldings, Inc., *1984);*

Precluded the issuance of a bargaining order to an employer as a remedy for outrageous unfair labor practices if the union has not yet obtained majority support, even if the employer misconduct at issue prevented the union from attaining that support (Gourmet Foods, Inc., *1984);*

Held that unions cannot restrict a member's right to resign from membership (Machinists Lodge 1414, *1984);*

Compelled unions, at the price of losing their bargaining rights, to allow nonmembers to vote on whether the union should affiliate with another union or merge with another local of the same union (Amoco Production Co., *1982;* F.W. Woolworth Co., *1984).*

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This partial list does not reflect the more subtle incremental shifts made in day-to-day decisions. Nor does it indicate the roadblocks now placed at the representation election stage when, driven by the current antiunion tide flowing from Washington, NLRB regional-office decisions have become more adverse to union and worker interests.

An AFL–CIO survey comparing board decisions during three random six-month periods, 1975–76 (three Nixon and two Ford appointees or reappointees), 1979–80 (four of the same members and one Carter appointee) and 1983–84 (one Carter and three Reagan appointees, one vacancy), discovered that the two earlier boards upheld unfair labor practice charges against employers 86 percent and 85 percent of the time, respectively; under the current board, that figure has plummeted to 55 percent. Where the earlier boards upheld such charges against unions 72 percent and 77 percent of the time, the Reagan board did so 85 percent of the time. (All unfair labor practice cases are initiated by the board's prosecutorial arm after it screens employer or union charges.) In representation cases—those arising from union elections, where the issues concern election conduct and the proper composition of bargaining units—previous boards upheld the employer position 36 percent and 44 percent of the time (employers raise representation issues more often than unions, usually as a delaying tactic); the present board found for employers in 75 percent of the cases.

Surely, there is no abstractly "correct" figure, but the numbers demonstrate how the balance has shifted. Simply stated, in doubtful or close cases, the Reagan board almost always tips the scale against unions and employees.

The Reagan board contends that it is concerned about the rights of employees rather than the rights of unions or employers. But individual rights often conflict with both union and employer rights. Hence if the board consistently held so-called individual rights paramount, one might conclude that unions and employers were faring equally poorly. But this is not the case. For where individual rights clash with union rights—as in the claimed individual right to resign from a union during a strike versus the collective right to protect union solidarity—the individual usually wins. But when the individual right clashes with the employer right—as in a claim of the individual right to be free from employer interrogation

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about union sympathies—the employer usually wins.

(Raymond J. Donovan, Reagan's embattled secretary of labor, is fond of saying that his department exists for "labor, not organized labor"—while his enforcement policies have consistently undercut both organized and unorganized labor and benefited employers, victimizing individual workers in workplace safety, and in equal-employment opportunity and fair labor standards enforcement.)

The Reagan board's defenders claim that the new line merely corrects the "extremes" and "imbalances" of earlier years. Board member Dennis calls it a "return to normalcy." Surely, unions must be wary of overstating the Reagan board's derelictions. But the fact is that these earlier boards, under Carter and before, had a Republican cast—and Hunter and Dotson are far from mainstream business-side appointments.

This time the pendulum has swung over the deep end. Even some management attorneys admit the significance of the Reagan shift; there is, for instance, one firm's admission that the board's new ban on union restrictions of a member's right to resign marks "a significant shift toward the employer in the balance of economic power during a strike." Another management firm, in a report on the antiunion prospects for employers during the second Reagan term, observed that now is the "ideal time" for employers to "assess whether union representation of employees is really working or whether employees would actually prefer no union representation"—a thinly veiled invitation to employers to seek union decertification.

John Fanning, a former board chairman, recently criticized the new board for having an actual agenda of "reviewing"—which is to say, revoking—long-standing doctrines. Traditionally, the board has resembled a court in that it decides cases as they come before it, refining the law gradually and reactively. But the members of the Reagan board—essentially Dotson and Hunter—have pursued a more aggressive agenda. They want to change the law, and they have sought out the right cases through which to do so.

In at least 17 instances, the Reagan board has asked federal circuit courts of appeal reviewing board decisions rendered prior to Reagan's appointments to return the cases to the new board for reconsideration—a highly unusual request. Meanwhile, in 1983 and 1984, the board identified several dozen so-called lead cases and "principal issues" then before it through which it has begun to introduce significant changes in board law. For each lead case or principal issue, decisions in 5 to 40 pending cases were held up until the board could announce its new doctrine.

This "reevaluation" process has contributed to and, in former board member Don A. Zimmerman's view, is the "principal reason" for the worst backlog of cases in the NLRB's history. Heavy board-member turnover since 1979 and Reagan's indifference to filling vacancies have further burdened board processes. Oversight hearings in 1983 and 1984 by a House subcommittee chaired by Rep. Barney Frank (D–Mass.) revealed a sharp drop in board decisional output, a threefold increase in just seven years in the number of pending unfair labor-practice cases, and an average 627-day lag from an unfair labor practice charge to a board decision. Since most unfair labor practice complaints are brought against employers, litigation delays inevitably operate in their favor.

None of this is surprising. In his 1980 Heritage Foundation manifesto, Hunter recommended repeal of "those NLRA provisions which establish collective rights as paramount to individual rights," including a cornerstone of the act: the union's right to be the exclusive collective-bargaining representative of a particular unit of employees. Hunter also recommended that the courts curtail the primacy of federal law over state civil and criminal laws and "eliminate the judicial antitrust exemption for union anticompetitive monopoly power." Both recommendations would make it easier for private individuals and businesses to embroil unions in endless litigation, and for local, state, and federal authorities to prosecute them.

Hunter proposed some specific recommendations. His first: "All future board members should have substantial experience in actual

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hand-to-hand labor-management relations in the private sector," rather than be "career government bureaucrats" lacking experience representing private parties in labor matters and before the board. (Hunter, a career NLRB lawyer and Senate aide, apparently excepted himself from his rule; in Dotson, Dennis and Van de Water, Reagan has indeed chosen people experienced in labor relations in the private sector—but all in the career service of management.) Hunter also urged the board to make aggressive use of its "extraordinary power" of seeking injunctions against unions to stop unfair labor practices, complaining that the board was ineffectual against union violations and violence.

Hunter has been true to his word. Virtually every request for an injunction against a union has been granted by the Reagan board. But this board is not so concerned with employer breaches of the law. Predecessor boards routinely granted 90 percent of the board's enforcement branch's requests for injunctions against unfair labor practices by management; under the Reagan board, that figure has plunged to 50 percent. From the late 19th century until the Norris-LaGuardia Act put an end to the practice in 1932, the hated "labor injunction" was the employers' most effective tool in suppressing worker organizing, picketing, and strikes. Now the NLRB appears to be reviving this tactic.

A favorite Dotson theme is that labor-management cooperation is the best solution to union-employer conflict, and that differences should be worked out in collective bargaining rather than brought before the board. Yet Dotson has also stated that "collective bargaining frequently means labor monopoly, the destruction of individual freedom, and the destruction of the marketplace as the mechanism for determining the value of labor." Small wonder that the Reagan board examines cases from an antiunion angle: it's all in the cause of reducing the "labor monopoly," which interferes with the natural order of the free market.

With the advent of Dotson, Hunter, and Dennis, the atmosphere at the board has soured; infighting, distrust, and even paranoia affect what used to be cooperative relations among board members and staffs. In an interview with the Bureau of National Affairs shortly before his term ended last December, board member Zimmerman bluntly declared that "there is no longer a sense of collegiality or any substantive discussion among members about complex cases." Soon after his confirmation, Dotson appointed Hugh L. Reilly, a former National Right to Work Committee lawyer, as NLRB solicitor. Dotson then promptly transferred authority over the board's appellate court lawyers from the general counsel to Reilly, upsetting a system in place since 1955. Members Zimmerman and Dennis publicly dissented (though formally "abstained") from Dotson's reorganization, and even one of the Reagan board's most zealous promoters, John S. Irving, former NLRB general counsel (a Ford appointee), called this "a solution for a problem which did not exist and unnecessarily caused ill will inside and outside the agency." Reilly's appointment sparked an uproar in labor circles and among many in Congress. But Dotson denies that Reilly is antiunion, and he speaks favorably of the Right to Work Committee's agenda.

These well-publicized problems have drawn organizations with keen interests in the board into unusual public efforts to intervene. The Teamsters union—a Reagan political ally—last summer urged Dotson's removal from the chairmanship. (Had this occurred, Dotson would still remain a regular board member for his five-year term unless, the act says, he were "removed by the President, upon notice and hearing, for neglect of duty or malfeasance in office.")

Soon thereafter, the National Association of Manufacturers did issue a statement praising Dotson as "a highly competent board chairman, who observes the highest professional standards," and urged President Reagan to "issue a strong statement" to that effect. The White House has remained noncommittal but will show its hand when it finally nominates replacements for Jenkins and Zimmerman. Conceivably, one of Reagan's appointees will be a mainstream, and perhaps even prounion, choice in order to placate the Teamsters and mute Capitol Hill critics while still assuring

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that solidly antilabor majorities will decide every case.

The labor leadership and the labor bar have begun to advocate alternatives to the board. Because it is so hostile and unpredictable they are leery of presenting cases that the board may use as vehicles to upset well-established precedent. A complete labor boycott indeed is remote, although there is much soul-searching by unions before going to the board. Perhaps one short-term remedy for labor is to go to the bargaining table, to try to compel employers, by contract, to acknowledge rights and protections that the NLRB no longer recognizes under the act. If so, in this period of overall union disadvantage in collective bargaining, labor's "must" list will increase—to include, for example, protections from "runaway shop" schemes now blessed by the board—and thus employers will be giving up what they never had in exchange for union concessions.

Although the board says it is acting in the interests of workers—as opposed to unions—one principal assumption of the federal labor laws has been quietly rejected in the process. That is the need to put a legal thumb on the scale to even out the inherently lopsided balance of power between management and worker. When the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Wagner Act in 1937, amidst an employer offensive to obstruct the new statute, it acknowledged that "a single employee [is] helpless in dealing with an employer," and that unions were therefore "essential to give laborers opportunity to deal on an equality with their employer." That observation is no less true today, but the Reagan board either fails to appreciate this fact or appreciates it too well.

Last year the House Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations, under the leadership of Rep. William L. Clay (D–Mo.) and its able staff counsel Fred Feinstein, held hearings entitled "Has Labor Law Failed?" The Subcommittee concluded that it had, because of its ineffectiveness in stemming a generation-long increase in management opposition to unionization, often carried out by unlawful means. The Subcommittee singled out the board for particular discredit, faulting its backlogs, politicization, and debasement of the act. The board and business have tried to write off the Subcommittee's report as partisan sniping, but the evidence in support of its critique is massive.

Labor is in for a long winter; Reagan's appointees could control the board until December 1992. But it may be that eight more years under a Reagan board will help spark a renewed militance in the labor movement that will, in the end, render the Reagan board itself irrelevant. □

To Our Contributors:

A few suggestions:

(1) Be sure to keep a copy of your ms—the mails aren't always reliable. And please remember that we can't return articles unless they're accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

(2) Please don't write to ask whether we're interested in such and such an article—it makes for useless correspondence. Look at our last few issues to see if your idea fits in. Or take a chance and send us your article.

(3) Type your ms *double-spaced*, with *wide* margins. Check all your figures, dates, names, etc.—they're the author's responsibility.

(4) Notes and footnotes should also be typed double-spaced, on a *separate* sheet. As we're not an academic journal, we prefer that they, wherever possible, be dropped altogether or worked into the text.

(5) We're usually quick in giving editorial decisions. If there's a delay, it's because a few editors are reading your article.

(6) Please bear with us—we have accumulated quite a backlog of material, and you may have to wait for a few issues before you see your article in print. □

THE EDITORS □

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Alvin Rosenfeld

Where Hitler Lives Again

Pop Culture Finds a New Hero

> The key to modern myths is in the banality (taken seriously) of kitsch success and the popularity of triviality—final traces of worlds gone under. Hitler and his people were the best performers of those things. . . .
>
> — *Hans-Jürgen Syberberg*

The long-legged, high-kicking beauties in Mel Brooks's *The Producers* look like any other chorus line of dancers but for a single exception: they are suited out in the black uniforms of the SS. The dance they perform, backed by a second chorus line of Valkyries, is called "Springtime for Hitler" and is meant to be a musical burlesque of Nazi antics. The number mixes mock-politics with female flesh, high-spirited farce with showy extravaganza. It finds a parallel in Brooks's most recent film, *To Be or Not to Be*, in a bizarre song-and-dance routine called "Naughty Nazis." In both cases, one looks on and laughs.

A skit on the popular television show *Saturday Night Live* portrays Hitler and Eva Braun fumbling over one another like two clumsy teenagers in heat. It's silly and stupid but probably also just funny enough to get a laugh. Not so the *National Lampoon* Hitler jokes, which are neither naughty nor funny but mostly just vulgar, tasteless, sick. Nevertheless, they continue to appear, so someone must like them. Is it the same crowd that listens to the popular singer David Bowie croon about "visions of swastikas in my head"; that snaps up the premier number of Larry Flynt's new magazine, the *Rebel*, because it features a huge swastika on its cover; that likes wearing punk styles that use Nazi symbols as fashionable emblems of a new social defiance?

One could multiply these examples many times over, but that would only belabor the obvious: the signs and symbols of the Third Reich have become part of the common language of popular culture and are today all around us. In England, according to the *Alternative Holiday Catalogue*, one can even "vacation in a Nazi-style camp, complete with barbed wire, searchlights, watch towers, and fifty guards in SS uniforms." This idea of Auschwitz-as-theme park has not yet crossed over to this side of the Atlantic, but there is still plenty of opportunity for those who want to fantasize about the "naughty Nazis." You can giggle over the Nazi buffoons of popular television shows, flaunt the swastika as your personal badge of disaffection, ogle the girls in the high black boots. For the children, there is *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit* and such "simulation games" as *Gestapo: A Learning Experience about the Holocaust*.

Hitler has become a gag, a piece of the fun. If one cannot yet talk about the arrival of Nazi chic, one can say that it is easy—and in no way regarded as a sign of gross social deviance—to indulge a taste for the stylistic gestures of a latter-day pop fascism, although a fascism commonly regarded as being without political implications. As the owner of a London boutique for punk fashion explains, "They like the Nazi things because they are interesting decorations." Is it possible that it never crossed the lady's mind that "the Nazi things" have a history of some consequence behind them?

It is possible. A prolonged dalliance with

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Nazi-inspired fun and games—with countless jokes, fads, films, fictionalizations, the whole run of popular and pornographic indulgences—not only dulls political awareness but dissipates and ultimately defeats the historical sense.

Laugh at Hitler often enough, dress him up as a stage villain, convert him into a cartoon of frightful or of ridiculous demeanor, and in time you will no longer know who or what he was. Play with the symbols of his Reich as if they were harmless toys, and before long the distractions of mind generated by the pleasures of light-hearted amusement weaken the sanctions of historical memory. *Holocaust* then comes to mind more readily as a popular television show than as an unprecedented crime within history. As for Hitler, rendered commonplace, he becomes a conventional focus of the leisure and entertainment industries, even something of a pop hero. According to David Bowie, Hitler was "one of the first rock stars." To catch him in a musical setting, you can, if you wish, listen to some of the songs of "Pink Floyd" or tune in to the English rock opera *Der Führer* and hear Eva Braun sing, in a voice of moony enchantment, "When I'm leaning against his shoulder, the bad times are over."

With such goings-on, the bad times may be only just beginning. While probably none of this is specifically intended as "pro-Nazi," its inevitable effect is to undermine any sane vision of culture and ultimately to erase the fingerprints of Hitler from a history of mass murder. To popularize the man and his crimes is to trivialize them and, in time, to render them almost invisible. Here, in the words of Saul Friedländer, is one prominent example of that process:

> A few months ago I saw Joachim Fest's film, *Hitler: A Career*, in a movie theater in Munich. The dazzling rise, the titanic energy, the Luciferian fall: it is all there. As for the extermination of the Jews, a few words in passing, no more. An inconsequential shadow of this grandiose tableau. For anyone who does not know the facts, the power and the glory still remain, followed by a veritable vengeance of the gods. . . .
>
> For anyone who does not know the facts, the mystical communion with the brownshirt revolution and its martyrs still remains.
>
> Thus is evidence transformed over the years, thus do memories crumble away.

The role of art in the erosion, as well as the establishment, of historical memory is fundamental, for most people do not have a primary relationship to "the facts" and learn about them second-hand, through the mediations of word and image. With few exceptions, we "see" what we are given to see, "know" what we are given to know, and thus come to retain in memory what impresses itself on us as vision and knowledge. We owe to the Czech writer Milan Kundera the insight that such knowledge has the deepest political consequences, indeed that "the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting."

One can, in this sense, talk about art's implication in a politics of remembrance as well as a politics of forgetting, an implication not lost on any writer who sifts through the debris of history in an effort to reconstruct the past, or on any national leader who is alert to the legendary or mythic dimensions of the past and has the gift of reviving them for his own political objectives. In both cases, the refashioning of the past need not be determined by any special fidelity to history, as if the latter has been fixed once and for all and is no longer malleable to the pressures of mind or imagination; rather, the appeal to the past follows the course of feeling—of dream, impulse, hope, or wish—and makes of the "facts" new fictions of desire.

What happens to our sense of reality as a consequence of these developments is obvious to any reader of contemporary fiction or any observer of contemporary politics. As the novelist E. L. Doctorow put it a while back, "There is no longer any such thing as fiction or nonfiction; there's only narrative." In the words of the same author: "What's real and what isn't—I used to know, but I've forgotten." William Styron carries this line of thinking beyond Doctorow's playful agnosticism to his own more deeply felt historical relativism:

> Facts *per se* are preposterous. They are like the fuzz that collects in the top of dirty closets. They don't really mean anything. . . . A novelist deal-

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> ing with history has to be able to say that such and such a fact is totally irrelevant, and to hell with the person who insists that it has any real, utmost relevance. . . . Certain facts . . . can be dispensed with out of hand, because to yield to them would be to yield or to compromise the novelist's own aesthetic honesty. . . . A brute, an idiotic preoccupation with crude fact is death to a novel, and death to the novelist.

Styron's desires as a novelist—or the imperatives of what he calls his "own aesthetic honesty"—brought him, in writing *Sophie's Choice*, to refashion Hans Frank, the Nazi governor-general of a large part of occupied Poland, as a Jew, and to make Rudolf Höss, the Commandant of Auschwitz, seem almost a decent man. George Steiner, in *The Portage to San Cristóbal of A.H.*, invented Jacob Grill—"son of a rabbi, from Poland"—as Hitler's ideological mentor and projected Hitler himself as something of a Torah-inspired visionary. In *Zelig*, Woody Allen uses a fake Oswald Pohl, the head of the SS Economic-Administrative Main Office and so the person chiefly responsible for the concentration-camp enterprise, to comment in pseudohistorical terms on a fictitious character whom Pohl allegedly "knew" in Nazi Germany.

It is a characteristic of the new narrative modes that distinctions between what is real and what is imagined drop away: historical figures take on fictional dimensions, fictional characters are placed within historical settings, and there is an intermingling of illusion and historically accredited reality. These conjunctions of fact and fiction are manifest in a wide body of contemporary literature and everywhere raise the same kinds of questions. How much of the "real" Richard Nixon, for instance, are we to call to mind when we meet a "character" named Richard Nixon in Robert Coover's *The Public Burning*? Is the "Henry Kissinger" named by name in Joseph Heller's *Good as Gold* the Henry Kissinger we know from the Washington years or is he not? How much of the historical Nat Turner survived in William Styron's *The Confessions of Nat Turner* and how much was passed over, made over, fundamentally changed?

To what degree can an author play with, reshape, or distort our sense of the past without doing damage to our overall sense of reality? When, as has been the case, critics call *Sophie's Choice* a "brilliant historical novel," are we not approaching a point of epistemological risk, at which our ability to know the difference between historical fiction and fictitious history begins to diminish and, for some, may begin to disappear?

These questions are not new and could be asked as well about works of literature that date back as far as Shakespeare's history plays and about the fiction of Scott and Tolstoy, but in recent years they have assumed a greater degree of seriousness and even taken on a certain urgency. They have done so at a time when "reality" itself has become a more extreme and elusive concept, when our ability to represent it within language has been called into question, and when the political will to misrepresent has become blatant and unrestrained. The aesthetic issues that always attend questions of representation take on a new edge when what is being represented is Hitler and Hitlerism, all the more so at a time when the Nazi Holocaust of the Jews is regularly labeled a "hoax" by the revisionists and when the image of Hitler is undergoing the kinds of transformation evident to any observer of popular culture.

What one sees today, in fact, is a double transformation of the historical, for not only is Hitler being fictionalized but so, too, are his victims, and in ways that often substitute and invert the images of the predator and his prey. A willed blurring of distinctions between Nazis and Jews and, at its most politically pernicious, a willed equation of the two, is detectable not only in the pages of fiction but in the programmatic deceptions of political life.

The categories and conventions of imaginative writing—doppelgänger motifs, tropes of transference and substitution, the signs and symbols of historical projection, conjunction, and inversion—are as well known to the professional journalist and the political propagandist as they are to the fiction writer. One need only pay attention to the political discourse at the United Nations and other international forums to realize that "factions," frauds, and other

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forms of fictitious history are hardly confined to literature.

The issue became especially acute during the 1982 Israeli–PLO war in Lebanon. What one witnessed then, and can observe still today, was a transposition of the language of the Holocaust onto a situation that in no way resembled it. The Jews were made out to be "Nazis," the Arabs were suddenly portrayed as the new "Jews," Beirut was likened to "the Warsaw Ghetto," and the charge of "genocide" was broadcast around the world. Menachem Begin, Israel's prime minister at the time, was "Hitler," his defense minister was "Eichmann," and the two together were said to be planning a "final solution of the Palestinian question" every bit as ruthless and comprehensive in its design as Hitler's *Endlösung*.

Now it is hardly news that political commentary can be as much a lying game as literature, but the steady stream of misinformation and willful deception in this instance seemed unprecedented. Moreover, the ruse was being performed not only by the professional propagandists directly involved in the fighting—that one expects in warfare—but by a large number of other, seemingly "neutral" observers, who should have had no immediate cause to participate in the elaboration of such a blatant fiction. Why, then, the impulse to "Nazify" the Lebanon War and to convert its combatants into inverted types of the Holocaust?

The license for the release of new fictions is almost always to be found in prior fictions—in this case, the 1975 United Nations resolution that equated Zionism with racism—but the motives for indulging and perpetuating the fictive sense are more deeply psychological and political. By stealing the language of the Holocaust from the Jews and awarding it to the Arabs—in essence, by translating the Palestinians into "Jews" and the real Jews into their would-be assassins—a prior Jewish claim on the conscience of the West can be vitiated and an enormous and unwanted burden of guilt finally be thrown off.

The particular cross-cultural larceny at work here, in other words, brings about a fundamental change in political perception and alters the historical character of *two* wars. The Lebanon War becomes the latest phase of a Jewish campaign against the entire Arab nation, as total in its fury as Hitler's war against the Jews, while the Nazi Holocaust, whose genocidal character was actual and not metaphorical, is nullified through the transmutation of its historicity into tropes. The particular politics of forgetting that is at work here proceeded not only by "semantic infiltration"—Daniel Patrick Moynihan's useful phrase for the gradually emerging propaganda war against Israel—but, more radically, by semantic transumption and usurpation, which aims to undo the memory of Jewish suffering under the Nazis by transferring the symbols that kept that memory alive to Israel's enemies. The idea is to delegitimize Jewish history and thereby discredit the notion that, as a result of their exceptional suffering, the Jews have any special claim on the world's sympathy.

Menachem Begin was also caught in a web of tropological thinking, for as his soldiers began to close in on the PLO in Beirut, the Israeli prime minister could conceive of the cornered Arafat only in terms of Hitler holed up in his Führerbunker. The Israeli press wondered aloud: Was Begin fighting the PLO in Lebanon or the Nazis in Berlin? Was he exploiting remembrance of the Holocaust as a political instrument or did he really see every enemy of the Jews as a Hitler, every war as a replay of the Holocaust? Whichever way, in the place of actual events there had emerged a typology of implacable evil, which projected the ghost of the Nazi Führer across the battlefields of Beirut. As the Israeli writer Amos Oz recently put it, there are times in the Middle East when it seems as if Adolf Hitler is not only alive and well but on call for active duty by anyone with a grievance or an enemy.

Hitler is not about to be demobilized soon. In politics and in literature—and as they relate to Hitler there is the temptation for the two to merge and become almost one—all the signs indicate a flourishing career ahead. William Gass, one of our most imaginatively resourceful writers, is at work on a novel that invokes Hitler to explore what he calls a "fascism of the heart." The pornographers will continue to

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appeal to their own version of this fascination (a fascism of the loins?) by turning out formulaic fiction that links eroticism with nazism. For those with a voyeur's taste for such things, there will soon be a film version of *The White Hotel*, which, one imagines, will offer moviegoers the opportunity to stare in open-mouthed wonder at the nude bodies lying about Babi Yar.

Undoubtedly, there will be television replays of *Holocaust*, of *The Last Days of Hitler*, *The Winds of War, The Bunker, Blood and Honor*, the Speer memoirs—all of which succeed in keeping images of the Third Reich steadily before the viewing public. The *National Lampoon* will recycle more of its Hitler jokes, the *National Examiner* will report sensational new sightings of fugitive Nazis, the revisionists will announce new "evidence" that the Holocaust never happened. It is predictable that a rock group will emerge that will outdo all others in raucous exhibitionism of Nazi sentiment and paraphernalia and that new New-Style boutiques will highlight Storm-Trooper uniforms for men and something equally brutal for women as the latest craze in fashion. As of this writing, the newest and raciest clothing items in London's Petticoat Lane are Hitler T-shirts, which feature a picture of the Führer under the heading "European Tour 1939–1945." The "tour" commences with "September 1939—Poland" and concludes with "May 1945—Berlin Bunker." For a change-off, one can also pick up black T-shirts at the stalls, emblazoned with the word "Bundeswehr."

For years, hobby shops have registered steady sales in model replicas of World War II German tanks and planes—cheaper ones for the children, more expensive ones for their elders. As part of this same market but on a more serious and higher-priced level, there will continue to be a brisk collectors' trade in original Nazi insignia, swords, and other symbols of the Reich, as there will be in oversized picture books on World War II weapons and warfare. Richly illustrated "lives" of Hitler will appear as will expensive, coffee-table albums of concentration-camp photographs and artwork. Someone will turn up missing Hitler watercolors, medical records, astrological charts, automobiles—anything that Hitler may have touched or been touched by. Our sense of the "family side" of the man will be teased by new revelations about Eva Braun, Blondi, a "mystery woman," a "lost son." Konrad Kujau, the enterprising West German forger, has already announced from jail that when he gets out he will produce before the world a sensation far more dramatic than his now-discredited "Hitler Diaries"—namely, Hitler's daughter. The fact that there never was such a daughter really does not matter, for when it comes to keeping Hitler alive and before the public's hungry eyes for news, frauds and fictions serve as well as facts.

The crucial point—crucial for being self-perpetuating, inexhaustible, and endlessly marketable—is simply to maintain "the Third Reich, in the person of its Führer, Adolf Hitler, [as] the greatest plot device the world has ever known." What is at stake here, then, is not historical credibility but narrativity—stories, emblems, and images that will fascinate and compel.

True, much of what has just been described is in the realm of kitsch and quatsch—the detritus of history refashioned into cheap and unworthy artifice—but it was at least partly on the rivers of such junk that Hitler originally floated into power. It is not high scholarship or high art, let alone high ideals, that sustains him but something a good deal further down in consciousness and culture. Call it the blood lusts of primitive instinct or the anarchic and nihilistic impulses that want to be satisfied free of all restraints. Or call it, as Hitler himself called it, the mad ambition of "*Weltmacht oder Niedergang*"—"world power or ruin."

Whatever else he may exemplify, Hitler stands for, appeals to, and calls forth an unprecedented extremity of destructive will. Charles Hamilton, the New York autograph dealer, probably summed up the secret of Hitler's posthumous appeal when, in considering the value of an object alleged to be Hitler's skull, he said simply, "Hitler is the supreme criminal of all times. He out-Neroes Nero, he out-Caligulas Caligula. Therefore, he is a most fascinating man."

It is easy to exploit a figure that generates such fascination, far less easy to contain the damage it may do once released into the world.

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The fate of symbols is always unpredictable, all the more so when they have behind them as much turbulence and unmastered energy as those that attach to Hitler. One recalls an insight of Elias Canetti, whose notebook jottings of 1942 include the following entry: "Some sentences release their poison only years after." Whether Canetti had been listening to one of Hitler's speeches when he wrote these words is unknown, but one readily sees how they could apply to the rhetoric of the Third Reich and how they might apply as well today, when the words and images of that era have assumed such popular currency. To be sure, they circulate now in an another mood and in a different, less dangerous political climate. All the same, there is inherent in the image of nazism a venom that, once released onto the page and into the mind, has the potential to turn lethal. As imaginative life domesticates images of Hitler and political life continues to exploit him, one should not be surprised to see the old poison again begin to flow free.

Just where it will go and what damage it may do is anybody's guess. Most of those involved in popularizing Hitler are probably too busy making money and having fun to give any thought to the social and political consequences of their efforts. As for the others, who deliberately set about manipulating historical symbols, the consequences have no doubt been far more precisely calculated by them. In both cases, the appeal to the Third Reich, whether for reasons of commercial or political profit, means a perpetuation in image of the very worst that history has given us and a revivification of the prospect that it may come round again.

One would rather be rid of the Nazi nightmare once and for all, but it has become too deeply embedded in fantasy life to be quickly or easily denied. The extensions, distortions, and exploitations of Nazi symbolism have by now become part of the history of the Nazi era as it has penetrated contemporary consciousness. In this respect Hitler has won, for he knew better than most that if truth has its appeal, so, too, do certain lies, which are every bit as irrepressible once they catch hold. For years the image of the man and his times has been broadly and successfully projected through the work of novelists, filmmakers, and other fictioneers, and it is they who have assumed and directed the narrative destiny of the Nazi period. Consequently, set loose by a hundred different stories, legends, and myths, the ghost of Hitler now roams through the popular mind in all the shapes that artifice and forgetfulness have combined to give him.

He will not go away soon. As fact, the "Thousand-Year Reich" lasted little more than a decade, but as fiction it goes on and on. And as it goes on, it inevitably thins out, changes shape, begins to look like something else. The Hitler of Beryl Bainbridge's *Young Adolf* or of George Steiner's *The Portage to San Cristóbal of A.H.* is not the Hitler of the years of Nazi terror but a much less threatening figure. The same can be said for the Hitler of Joachim Fest's film biography and of Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's celebrated *Hitler: A Film from Germany*. The historical sense does not stand up very well against such popular projections, whose cumulative effect can only work to neutralize the past and make of it something almost benign. As an indication of what happens to collective memory as the processes of mythification take over, one can hardly do better than note the following episode from Daniel Lang's *A Backward Look: Germans Remember*:

> Haupts [Leo Haupts, a professor of modern history at Cologne University] had known of the deportation of Jews during the war, he told me, but that was all. He said he had known nothing about concentration camps. He didn't envy Germans who had, he said—they probably lived with a guilty conscience. I asked Michael [his son] whether any legacy of guilt had come down to young Germans, and he shook his head. "Why should it?" he demanded indignantly. "We weren't even born!" . . . Haupts said good-naturedly that he wondered whether concentration camps were destined to be remembered. In time, the professor observed, facts could turn fuzzy, lending themselves to revision. He cited an example. Among historians, he informed me, it had long been accepted that Charlemagne had decapitated four thousand Saxons in the eighth century for stealing cattle from the Franks. Well, Haupts said, in recent years some histori-

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ans had been leaning toward the view that the Saxons had not been massacred but merely banished. Haupts concluded, "It's only speculation, of course, but it may be that there will come a day when people will ask, 'Were there really concentration camps, or was that just a myth?' "

Professor Haupts recalls a character in Richard Hugo's recent novel, *The Hitler Diaries*, who argued that "history is a court whose judgments are always appealed. . . . Napoleon was condemned and reviled, but history has come to recognize that he was a great man." With enough sensationalizing publications and other popularizing versions of Hitler, the ranks of the great may soon increase, and one can imagine a day not too far off when at least some people will ask, "Was he really so monstrous a fellow?" □

Poverty in Our Richest City . . .

The following is excerpted from "The Changing Face of Poverty: Trends in New York City's Population in Poverty, 1960–1990," by Emanuel Tobier, prepared for the Community Service Society:

The poverty statistics for the 1970s and early 1980s reveal a 19 percent increase in the number of poor people in New York City, and a 31 percent increase in the number of nonelderly poor. Although there were approximately 800,000 *fewer* people overall in the city in 1982 than in 1970, there were 227,000 *more* poor people. The poverty rate climbed from 14.9 percent in 1969 to 24 percent in 1982. Yet during this period the number of people receiving benefits from the two public-assistance programs—Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Home Relief—that aid the under-65 age group, *fell by 6 percent*, from 911,000 to 859,200.

The AFDC program, which overwhelmingly enrolls poor female-headed households with dependent children, decreased by 3 percent between 1969 and 1982. Between 1969 and 1979 alone, the city's poor female-headed households with children rose by 72 percent. The number of children in poverty rose by 15 percent, while the number of children on welfare fell by 8 percent. The number of persons on Home Relief, which primarily serves single adults, fell by 20 percent between 1969 and 1982, despite the 17 percent growth in the number of poor single adults during the 1969–79 period.

The AFDC program expanded along with the poverty population between 1969 and 1972. As the New York City economy underwent a rapid and dramatic contraction, the AFDC caseload grew by 20 percent. But (with the exception of one year) the trend in AFDC has been persistently downward since 1973, even though the poverty population has been persistently expanding. Cumulatively, the AFDC caseload fell by 19 percent between 1972 and 1983. The Home Relief caseload, on the other hand, began to contract in 1969 and by 1974 had fallen by 27 percent. Since then, the trend in the utilization of this program has been quite irregular: rising between 1975 and 1976, then dropping through 1981, and in the last three years showing once again a strong upward trend, undoubtedly reflecting the rising number of unattached or childless adults who are out of work. The number of persons on Home Relief grew by 33 percent between 1981 and 1983.

The chief reason for the pronounced divergence between the population on welfare and the population in poverty is explained by the radical change that developed during the late 1970s in the relationship between the poverty threshold, as defined by the federal government, and the state-defined eligibility levels for public assistance. For example, between 1969 and 1982 the poverty threshold in current dollars for a four-person family rose by 99 percent, from $3,721 to $7,412. In 1969 the maximum income limit for welfare eligibility for such a family was $3,612 in New York City, or 97 percent of that year's poverty threshold. This income limit was adjusted upward by 27 percent between 1969 and 1974, but because it lagged behind the inflation rate, it dropped to 91 percent of the 1974 poverty line. In 1974, however, the maximum income limit was capped by the New York State government; it was not increased again until 1981, when the basic grant was raised, and again in 1984, when the shelter allowance was increased.

Because of this cap, by 1979 a four-person family whose income was as little as 46 percent of the prevailing poverty threshold would *not* qualify for welfare. The increase in 1981 brought the figure up to 67 percent, and the 1984 raise will keep it at that level. If the maximum income limit had been adjusted in accordance with the poverty threshold, New York City's welfare population would have risen by 40 to 45 percent between 1969 and 1982, instead of contracting by 6 percent. . . .

It is true, however, that a significant offset to the erosion in living standards of a family reliant on AFDC has been provided by the increasing availability and value of so-called noncash-benefit programs, such as Food Stamps. Minuscule in 1969, the Food Stamp program in 1981 was adding approximately $1,500 to the annual purchasing power of a family of four on public assistance. But even taking Food Stamps into account, the benefits for such a family in New York still amount to only 83 percent of the official federal poverty threshold and still leave the family 15 percent below its 1969 level of living. □

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Abraham Brumberg

"Sham" and "Farce" in Nicaragua?

Documentary Evidence on the Nicaraguan Election

Long before the election took place in Nicaragua, the Reagan administration dismissed it as "sham" and "Soviet style." After the election took place on November 4, 1984, President Reagan pronounced it a "farce." To anyone familiar with the kind of electoral exercises conducted regularly in the Soviet bloc, so unsparing a judgment seems odd. To my knowledge, the Communist party of the Soviet Union has never failed to obtain less than a 98 percent electoral "mandate."[1] In Nicaragua, the Sandinista FSLN pulled only 67 percent of the total vote, and parties opposed to the FSLN (on both the right and the left) obtained 35 out of the 96 seats in the National Assembly (see the box on p. 000). Is the FSLN perhaps an *inept* totalitarian party? Or are the Sandinistas so wily and dexterous as to have arranged for a modest victory, the better to hoodwink their adversaries? But then, why had they so steadfastly predicted that "at least 80 percent" of the population would rally to their banner?

These are baffling questions—but not, apparently, to an Administration that is interested in little more than justifying its attempt to topple the Nicaraguan government.[2] What is striking about these attempts is how much they recall some Soviet *modi operandi*. Consider the following:

Armed bands that excel in torture, rape, and murder are financed by the CIA and referred to routinely as "freedom fighters."[3] (Think of the "liberators" sent by Moscow to Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968.) Without producing a shred of evidence, the State Department and the White House continue to accuse the Sandinistas of arming the Salvadoran guerrillas. (In the Soviets' parlance, it's "Western imperialism" that's always responsible for organizations such as Solidarity.) When the Sandinistas acquire arms to defend themselves, the Administration floats fearful stories about "offensive weapons" bound to be used to "invade" neighboring Honduras or Costa Rica. (One pretext for invading Czechoslovakia in 1968 was the "discovery" of a "cache" of West German arms in the Bohemian countryside.) For months, American land and naval forces conduct intimidating maneuvers near Nicaragua. The official explanation? Why, just your garden-variety military exercises. (Think of the Warsaw Pact maneuvers held intermittently during the Solidarity period in Poland.) The State Department engages in patently specious "negotiations" with the Nicaraguan government, but then breaks them off on the grounds that Managua is inflexible and intransigent.[4] (One is reminded of the "negotiations" between the Soviet Politburo and the Czech Communist leaders; the Czechs proved so "intransigent" that they had to be invaded a few weeks later.)

To come back now to the Nicaraguan election. What evidence is there that it was indeed a "farce"? To deal with this question so long after the event may strike the reader as an academic exercise. But since the American press (rather preoccupied at the time with our own election—and with fictitious Soviet MIGs) paid scant attention to that election, and since Washington claimed that it was the litmus test of Nicaragua's "totalitarian" character, a careful survey of what actually did (and did not) occur seems in order.

What follows is based only to a small extent on my own observations. My principal sources

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are a number of reports by delegations who observed the election, as well as the campaign that preceded it, on behalf of American and European human rights and political organizations. How reliable are they? Well, of the 500 or so foreign observers there were some who produced pro-Sandinista panegyrics; these, needless to say, I consigned to the wastebasket. Some delegations included people favorably disposed to the Sandinista regime, but they were vastly outnumbered by those whose impartiality is beyond question.[5] I have selected only reports whose conclusions rest on meticulous documentation and analysis, as well as on personal experiences that clearly match those related by other observers.

The Timing

Is IT TRUE that the elections would not have taken place had it not been for international—and mainly American—pressure? When the Sandinistas took power in July 1979, they promised to hold elections as soon as "the conditions of national reconstruction permit it." To many Nicaraguans, this meant a matter of months. But the FSLN argued that under existing conditions (50,000 dead, 100,00 wounded, a ravaged economy, and a largely illiterate population), immediate elections were impractical. And so, in August 1980, the Council of State passed a decree stipulating that the election would take place in 1985. One can legitimately speculate whether the compelling motive for postponing the elections was indeed "national reconstruction" or consolidation of power or, for that matter (as a government official told me ironically) because "my Sandinista friends perhaps just don't like elections." After all, it took the FSLN a whole year to set the date of the election. In the interval many a Comandante spoke disparagingly about the whole exercise, claiming that "the people" had already registered their choice by supporting the FSLN's armed victory over Somoza. Yet it is a fact—whatever the inclinations of some Sandinistas—that the date was finally set, preparations went into motion in 1981, and by 1983 were moving decisively forward. The LASA report (p. 3), therefore, is clearly justified in concluding that "the Sandinistas had essentially adhered to their own publicly announced schedule for holding [the election]."

On the other hand—and here I touch upon

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one of the major findings of the reports—it would be absurd to dismiss the importance of international pressure. Such pressure clearly influenced the decision to advance the election date to November 1984, as Sandinista officials themselves have admitted. The reports, however, agree that the Sandinistas were eager to please Nicaragua's "friends"—the Socialist International, West European governments, the Contadora nations—which all had warned the FSLN that unless it demonstrated a commitment to "political pluralism," it would be deprived of a crucial source of economic and political support (see Chitnis, p. 4).

The FSLN and the Opposition

ABOUT 10 POLITICAL PARTIES have existed in Nicaragua since 1979, but although they were permitted, before 1984, to organize, hold indoor meetings, recruit members, and display political posters, their activities were so drastically circumscribed as to bar them from competing with the FSLN. (This, incidentally, was one of the criticisms voiced by the Socialist International et al.) Over the years, the FSLN had tightened its grip on the government apparatus, on the police and the armed forces, achieving in effect a fusion between party and state. Add to this the FSLN's influence over the various "mass organizations," the instrument of censorship, and the government's ownership of both television stations and of 16 out of the 39 radio stations, and you have a party that enjoys not merely "a powerful advantage" over its political rivals (in the words of the LASA report), but palpable political hegemony.

Yet the question is not so much whether the FSLN is effectively in control, as whether there are any signs that it is ready to dilute its hegemony by providing meaningful (that is, institutional) political space for its critics. The electoral law passed early in 1984 offers some answers to this question. According to the WOLA report—to cite but one example—it was "well conceived . . . [and] compares favorably with electoral laws in other Latin American countries" (p. 19). It provides for an independent body, the Supreme Electoral Council (SCE), to administer and supervise the elections; for compulsory registration (to be used for the purposes of a national census) but not for compulsory voting (unlike the electoral laws in many other Latin American countries, including El Salvador); for an intricate structure of proportional representation that ensures the presence of even the smallest parties in the National Assembly. Each registered party received from the state the sum of 9 million cordobas ($322,000), and the SCE published and repeatedly broadcast over the radio a code of ethics that Lord Chitnis, for one, found "almost insufferably pious" (Chitnis, p. 14).

The FSLN made numerous concessions to the political opposition with regard to the electoral law, as it did with the timing of the elections: the minimal number of votes needed for representation in the National Assembly was reduced; the SCE, whose original three members were, according to the opposition, all Sandinistas, was augmented by two non-FSLN members;[6] the campaign period was extended to three months; the amount of free campaigning time on radio and TV was significantly increased; more "economic" support (such as money and newsprint) was given to each party. The provision requiring voters to retain their registration cards was rescinded, thus eliminating the possibility "that in the future the failure to vote (as evidenced by the lack of a validated voter credential) could be used as the basis for government reprisals or denial of public services" (LASA, p. 11).

One issue on which the FSLN would not budge was lowering the voting age to 16. When the proposal was first put forward, many observers (including me) assumed this to be yet another stratagem designed to secure a broader mandate for the FSLN. Yet, in fact, the voting age in Nicaragua had been 16 from the late 1890s until 1912, and again from 1938 until 1979, when the Sandinistas themselves raised it to 21. In view of that, the WOLA report concluded, "the extension of the franchise should be supported." Ironically, given the widespread resistance among the young to the military draft (which also starts at age 16), the Sandinistas may well have bought themselves a pack of trouble: the young are not necessarily the ardent disciples of the revolution they once were.

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The Campaign

ONE OF THE GRAVEST CHARGES leveled against the FSLN was that it used all the instruments at its disposal—the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDSs), the censorship apparatus, the bands of hotheads known as "Turbas"—to prevent the contending parties from getting their messages across, and to create a climate of "fear and intimidation."

It is indisputable that many Nicaraguans fear (as LASA puts it) that " 'something would happen' to them if they don't do what the government wants" (p. 27). And for good reasons: the legacy of the Somoza regime; the memory of the radical policies of 1981–82 (when the Turbas, among others, were given free reign); the inclination of some of the Sandinista leaders to equate legitimate dissent with treason.[7] Curiously, however, all observers found that fear scarcely deterred people from voicing anti-Sandinista sentiments, often in strident and acrimonious terms and within earshot of Sandinista officials, either to the odd foreigner or among themselves.[8] Nor did observers find any evidence that the CDSs either engaged in "spying activities" or threatened to withdraw ration cards—as has frequently been alleged—from those refusing to attend communal meetings or to cast their votes for the FSLN. Observers' accounts of the character and functions of the CDSs accord, in general, with the view of Juan Corradi (*Dissent*, Summer 1984), who found the CDSs a mixed bag—some "innocuous," some acting "spontaneously," others following "the FSLN line."

There were, of course, incidents of harassment, some of them nasty. The most serious occurred at three rallies organized by supporters of Arturo Cruz (more about Cruz later). All in all, however, there was remarkably little violence. No serious injuries were reported, and most of the several hundred rallies held during the campaign passed without disruption. The AW report, which deals exclusively with freedom of speech and assembly during the campaign, found that at meetings disrupted by Turbas "uniformed police were present . . . and it is clear that they acted to prevent direct physical contact" between the adversaries (AW, p. 10).

All this is by no means to give a clean bill of health to the FSLN. In an interview granted to the Sandinista daily *Barricada*, for instance, the presidential candidate of the Nicaraguan Communist party, Allan Zambrana, contemptuously rejected his interlocutor's claim that the Turba incidents happened spontaneously. "Only someone stupid or who doesn't want to think could believe that [Sandinista] leaders aren't aware of actions taken by their supporters," said Zambrana.[9] When it comes to these matters, I suppose a good Communist knows what he is talking about. The very fact that the number of such incidents declined after the FSLN promised to "do something about it" speaks for itself; but so does the fact that concerted pressure forced the Sandinistas to make a promise—and to honor it.

Finally, to the matter of censorship. According to the electoral law, all preventive censorship (introduced as part of the "state of national emergency" in March 1982) was to be lifted, with the exception of items directly affecting "national security." This provision, the observers note, was applied to radio, TV, and to public campaign meetings and the like; but the provision was cavalierly disregarded in the case of the daily newspaper *La Prensa*. The paper continued to be subjected to pettifogging and arbitrary harassment, which on two occasions forced the editors to suspend publication.

Why this hostile and heavy-handed interference? Is it perhaps because *La Prensa* is the only genuine voice of opposition in Nicaragua? And is *La Prensa*—as it is so often portrayed in the American press—a "model" of responsible journalism? Alas, the evidence (and here I draw on my occasional reading of the paper as well as on the reports) suggests rather different answers. Apart from its penchant for unabashed sensationalism (some time ago it carried a front-page story on a woman giving birth to a chicken), *La Prensa* is also at least as *parti pris* as *Barricada*—indeed perhaps even more so, since the latter has carried interviews with opposition leaders, while *La Prensa* has studiously refrained from publishing anything even remotely favorable to the government. During the campaign it refused to carry any of the eminently nonpartisan instructions issued by the SCE, and it ran only pieces about its "own"

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candidate, Arturo Cruz. *La Prensa* has yet to mention any of the numerous—and incontrovertible—cases of Contra atrocities; it has, in effect, promoted the Contra cause as well as Reagan's policy on Nicaragua.

All of this—which the reports carefully document—may explain the FSLN's unremitting hostility to *La Prensa*. This neither justifies the censorship, nor should it obscure the far more important fact that no constitutional or institutional checks on the regime's freedom to wield censorship are yet in place. But it suggests that freedom of expression is likely to be the first victim of a siege mentality.

Abstentionism and Withdrawal

TO THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION, ultimate proof of the election's fraudulence was the fact that Dr. Arturo Cruz was ostensibly prevented from fielding his candidacy. Cruz, Nicaragua's former ambassador to the United States who resigned from his post in November 1981, was nominated in July 1984 as the "Coordinadora's" presidential candidate. But his absence from the ballot presumably invalidated the whole electoral process. How fair is this contention?

First, the Coordinadora (see box, p. 000) is in fact smaller than the sum of its parts might suggest. Its political program—and many of its specific demands appear in the platforms of other parties—is less notable than its policy of abstaining from the election. While some of the Coordinadora's members have been willing to reach agreement with the Sandinistas, the organization is dominated by the fiercely anti-regime COSEP, the umbrella organization of large-scale entrepreneurs. According to Philip Taubman (*New York Times*, Oct. 21, 1984), COSEP "was in frequent contact with the CIA about the election." On July 30, 1984, the *Washington Post* reported that Coordinadora spokespersons admitted it had no intention of participating in the elections; in early August the *Times* noted that Archbishop Obando y Bravo (head of Nicaragua's Catholic church) acknowledged, in a meeting with U.S. businessmen, "that he and his diocese had been actively involved in efforts to secure the removal of the FSLN government" (LASA, p. 9).

Second, whether or not Cruz ever seriously contemplated running in the elections, the evidence indicates that he was prevented from doing so, not by the Sandinistas (who were in fact keen on having him run in order further to legitimize the electoral process), but by his more intransigent allies in the Coordinadora—and by the United States. Philip Taubmann put it as follows:

> Since May [1984], when American policy toward the election was formed, the Administration has wanted the opposition candidate, Arturo Cruz, either not to enter the race or, if he did, to withdraw before the election, claiming that conditions were unfair, [senior Administration] officials said. "The Administration never contemplated letting Cruz stay in the race," one official said, "because then the Sandinistas could justifiably claim that the elections were legitimate, making it much harder for the United States to oppose the Nicaraguan government." (*New York Times*, Oct. 21, 1984.)

Admittedly, the charge that Cruz was in effect manipulated by the Coordinadora is a grave one. But the evidence leads to this conclusion. The WOLA, LASA, Chitnis, and CC reports all demonstrate in meticulous detail that the FSLN made significant concessions to the Coordinadora; the latter raised the ante each time an agreement was in the offing. The one issue on which the FSLN would not relent was the Coordinadora's request that the Contras be fully amnestied and given an opportunity to participate in the election. The FSLN also insisted—legitimately—that the Coordinadora's "proposals for major changes in the political structure and public policies should constitute the Coordinadora's party platform for the election, rather than conditions for the Coordinadora's entry into the electoral process" (LASA, p. 20). Cruz, who spent a good part of the preelection period drumming up support in Latin America and in the United States, maintained a Hamletlike stance on the matter of the Contras, now denouncing them, now calling them "our esteemed fellow citizens who choose the route of war" (LASA, p. 18). His statements on this subject since the election have been similarly inconsistent.

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By September 30, it seemed as if the differences between the FSLN and the Coordinadora were about to be patched up. At a meeting of the Socialist International in Rio de Janeiro, presided over by Willy Brandt, the two sides reached an agreement that called for a two-month postponement of the elections (a major FSLN concession), contingent on a cease-fire with the Contras, to be arranged by the Coordinadora. At the last moment, however, Cruz announced that he could not sign the document without consulting his allies in Managua and asked for a three-day postponement. The FSLN representative, declaring that he could temporize no longer, pronounced the agreement null and void.

According to Brandt, the fault for breaking off the negotiations lay with the Coordinadora, not with "the Sandinista Comandante" (*La Repubblica*, Rome, Nov. 15, 1984). The Comandante referred to by Brandt was Bayardo Arce, one of the Directorate's leading hard-liners, whose personal commitment to the election was, to put it charitably, questionable. Only a few months ago, he had delivered a speech at a closed meeting of the Nicaraguan Socialist party in which he characterized the election as a ruse aimed at obtaining international support for the regime. Since the Sandinistas were obviously embarrassed by the speech—and formally disavowed it—why then did they delegate Bayardo Arce to carry on the negotiations? No one knows the answer (a likely one, in my opinion, is sheer stupidity, and not the first or the last of its kind), but one could conceivably argue that the FSLN prepared the agreement knowing it would be rejected, thus providing it with an ideal pretext to terminate the negotiations.[10]

So Machiavellian a hypothesis flies in the face of both logic and available evidence. The FSLN had clearly made strong efforts to reach an agreement with Cruz, so as to appease his supporters in the West—why then torpedo its own plans? Moreover, in view of the Coordinadora's record, it is fair to assume that it would not have ratified the agreement; had the requested three-day postponement been granted, Cruz would probably have returned from Managua empty-handed. (Once the agreement was a dead letter, it cost the Coordinadora nothing to announce, 10 days later, that they had accepted it!)

Abstention from elections for political reasons is, as WOLA notes, a venerable Latin American practice (p. 37). The Coordinadora employed this tactic with never a thought of getting anything in return (except proving Reagan's point that the elections were a "sham"). Virgilio Godoy's last-minute decision to withdraw from the race was a different matter. Godoy, the head of the PLI (Independent Liberal party), claimed that the FSLN had failed to provide "minimal conditions" for a fair election.

The PLI, which had a leading role in the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship, was part of the "Popular Revolutionary Front" until February 1984; Godoy himself served until then as labor minister. Godoy, whose candor, courage, and intelligence impressed me when we met in Managua last year, can certainly not be accused of sympathy for Nicaragua's extreme right wing, or for the Contras. As spokesman for his party, Godoy had been campaigning vigorously, opposing the FSLN particularly on economic issues and on the Cuban and Soviet presence in the country. If so creditable a figure as Godoy decided to throw in the towel, then perhaps conditions for the elections were indeed as bad as they were so often portrayed?

Not so, say the observers. In their numerous conversations with Godoy, he seemed reluctant, if not altogether evasive, about the reasons for his dramatic decision, though he told the WOLA representatives that "the PLI would have more influence over political events in Nicaragua through the National Dialogue."[11] This is to say he hoped to achieve the goal of meaningful compromise outside the electoral process (WOLA, p. 37). Precisely what kind of concessions he expected to wrest from the FSLN at that late stage he did not divulge to his interviewers, who all were mystified as to his motives and bemused by his *modus operandi*.

In the end the result was a smaller PLI representation in the National Assembly than his party would reasonably have expected to obtain. Many PLI candidates refused to heed Godoy's call, among them the party's vice-

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presidential candidate, Constantino Pereira. All this motivated Lord Chitnis, an old hand at Liberal politics, to deliver himself of some testy if amusing comments:

> As I traveled the country before polling day, I did not meet a single Liberal who was in favor of withdrawal and indeed met some who were extremely angry about what was going on. . . . In other words, it is at least questionable whether the Liberal party did withdraw. What is unquestionable is that the party was thrown into complete confusion but that nevertheless it polled well in the election. Indeed, it is almost certain that without the confusion the party would have come second . . . and that Dr. Godoy would have had the democratic credentials to have become the leader of the opposition to the FSLN.

And his parting shot:

> I have spent 25 years in and around the organizations of liberalism. I thought I had seen every excess of nonsense and mayhem to which

The Election: Participants, Nonparticipants & Results

PARTICIPATING PARTIES:

FSLN (*Sandinista National Liberation Front*) — founded in 1961 as a guerrilla movement, was formally established as the "vanguard party of the revolution" in 1970.

To the Right FSLN:

PCD (*Democratic Conservative Party*) — considers itself "centrist"; strongly for separation of FSLN from state, for complete abolition of censorship, negotiations with the Contras.

PLI (*Independent Liberal Party*) — affiliated with the Liberal International; in favor of structural reforms, a "truly" mixed economy, an end to ties with Cuba and the Soviet Union.

PPSC (*Popular Social Christian Party*) — platform calls for "socialism inspired by Christianity," substantive concessions to the Catholic church including religious instruction in public schools, for abolition of military draft, less state interference in the economy.

To the Left of the FSLN:

PSN (*Nicaraguan Socialist Party*) — formed in 1944, recognized by the Soviet Union since 1970; supports general program of the FSLN but criticized it for "arbitrary actions," "sectarianism," and "adventurism"; occasionally mildly critical of the Soviet Union.

PCdeN (*Nicaraguan Communist Party*) — broke away from PSN in 1971; unswervingly pro-Moscow; for "dictatorship of the proletariat," land to the peasants and (well, read Lenin).

MAP-ML (*Marxist-Leninist Popular Action Movement*) — shades of Maoism; for abolishing "bourgeois" parties; fiercely critical of "bourgeois" and "social democratic" FSLN.

NONPARTICIPATING OPPOSITION:

La Coordinadora (also CDN) — composed of three political parties: PSC (Social Christian Party), founded in 1957 and closely linked with the Christian Democratic party of Venezuela; PLC (Liberal Constitutional party), heir to the old Liberal party of Nicaragua; and the PSD (*Social Democratic Party*), closely associated with *La Prensa*, and organized by right-of-center professionals in 1979. A fourth party, PCN (Nicaraguan Conservative party), a minuscule splinter of the old Conservative party, has not been officially recognized as a party; for its program, see Note 10 of this article. The Coordinadora also includes: two labor unions, CUS (*Confederation for Trade Union Unification*, affiliated with the ICFTU) and the CTNM (*Nicaraguan Confederation of Workers*, affiliated with the PSC), and also: COSEP (*Higher Council of Private Enterprise*); and a large part of the Catholic hierarchy.

ELECTION RESULTS:

Party:	*Number of Votes Cast:*	*Perc. of Valid Votes:*	*Assembly Seats Won:*
FSLN	735,967	67.0	61
PCD	154,327	14.0	14
PLI	105,560	9.6	9
PPSC	61,199	5.6	6
PCdeN	16,034	1.5	2
PSN	14,494	1.3	2
MAP-ML	11,352	1.0	2
(null)	71,209		
Total:	1,170,142	100	96

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they are prone, but the Nicaragua Liberals proved me wrong. (Chitnis, p. 12.)

Had it not been for the "abstentionist strategy" of some Liberals and of Cruz, the opposition as a whole might have won 45 percent of the Assembly seats. Such a percentage would automatically have blocked any FSLN attempts to railroad through an unpopular constitution, for the law requires a two-thirds vote in favor of any provision of the new constitution. Abstentionism may have pleased Reagan, but it did little to help political pluralism in Nicaragua.[12]

No one can, or does, accuse Godoy of having been bought off by the Reagan administration. But the frequent meetings between Godoy and U.S. embassy officials subjected him, in the words of one of his "oldest friends," "to terrible pressure from the Embassy" (LASA, p. 30). As for Clemente Guido, the presidential candidate of the PCD (Popular Conservative party) he actually told John B. Oakes (of the *New York Times*) that "two weeks before the election a U.S. Embassy official visited my campaign manager and promised to help him with money to succeed me as party leader if he withdrew from my campaign. He did." ('Fraud' in Nicaragua," *New York Times*, Nov. 15, 1984). The *Times* correspondent in Nicaragua, Stephen Kinzer, also reported cases of "very clear pressure" by U.S. diplomats (LASA, p. 31). Guido's particular allegation remains unsubstantiated, but WOLA's careful conclusion cannot be gainsaid: "There is considerable evidence to suggest that the U.S. was determined to undermine the Nicaraguan elections as a means of assuring their illegitimacy in order to justify continued support of the Contras" (p. 49).

Despite Cruz's withdrawal and the PLI's semiwithdrawal, the Nicaraguan voter still faced a relatively wide range of choices on major issues—"considerably wider," as the LASA report puts it:

> than in recent elections in El Salvador and Guatemala.... With regard to foreign policy, the FSLN government was flanked by one party attacking it for aligning Nicaragua too closely with Soviet foreign policy (the PPSC), and another party attacking it for not bringing the country closer to the Soviet camp (the PCdeN). On economic strategy, the PCD called for greater latitude for the private sector, while the MAP-ML advocated complete nationalization of private enterprise. People concerned about the military draft could also choose several alternative policies to the right of the FSLN, including that of the PCD, which wants to abolish conscription altogether. (LASA, p. 20.)

Finally, the debates on TV and radio and at public meetings were hardly marked by excessive restraint. According to the Socialist International document, the campaign "was fierce, including outspoken attacks from all parties concerned." David MacMichael, for instance,

> [heard] "Clemente Guido addressing a rally over Radio Mundial. It was a fighting speech; Guido promised to end military conscription if elected and called for defeat of the "Communist" Sandinistas amid much chanting of "*democracia si, comunismo no.*" He asked citizens to turn out en masse and use five minutes in the voting booth to get rid of a nonrepresentative, oppressive government. Hardly the sort of speech one would expect to hear during a "sham election" (p. 7).

Election Day

On this—as on so many other issues—all observers agree: the elections were eminently fair, the conditions for secrecy were scrupulously observed, the incidence of irregularities (as reported by the contesting parties) remarkably low. Each party was allowed to send its representatives as poll watchers (though not all could muster enough "*fiscales*" to cover the nearly 4,000 polling sites) and to count and sign the final vote tally for each precinct. In El Salvador's election, praised by the Reagan administration as "a great civics lesson" for North Americans, voting was compulsory, violence was rampant (a number of people were killed on election day), a sizable portion of the voting population was excluded, and both ballots and ballot boxes were translucent.

The only violence reported on election day in Nicaragua was caused by Contra attacks on polling stations, and votes were cast in heavily curtained booths, with ballots so designed as to make it impossible to see how they were marked.

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Some Concluding Remarks

IT SHOULD BE CLEAR by now that despite the disadvantages under which the opposition labored, both the electoral campaign and the election proper were not exactly "Soviet style," "sham," or a "farce." But what about the larger questions? The election marks a step forward, but what of the danger of "two steps backward"? What is to prevent a "vanguard party," imbued with a self-righteous sense of its historical mission and a built-in bias against "bourgeois" institutions (presumably including "bourgeois democracy") from making short shrift of the electoral results? Will it gradually begin to relax its grip on the army, the police, and the state apparatus and—as Lappé so correctly puts it—"come to share power with other forces in the society"? Will power now be vested in the National Assembly, in Daniel Ortega, the elected president, and Sergio Ramirez, the vice-president—or will the National Directorate of the FSLN continue to call the shots? And could there be, for that matter, a return to the baleful "leftism" that prevailed in 1981–82?[13]

Answers to these crucial questions can only be tentative. Nicaragua teems with bizarre contradictions. "Liberal, corporatist, and populist elements" (to quote Corradi) vie with one another; Christianity seems to many people compatible with revolutionary anticapitalism; nationalism parades in "socialist" clothes; authoritarian impulses coexist with sturdy individualism, and anti-Somozismo easily translates into anti-Sandinismo. Even so hostile a critic of the Sandinistas as David Nolan notes that their "Marxism-Leninism" is at odds with their determined and consistent rejection of terror, "revolutionary" or otherwise, or with their espousal of a mixed economy as a permanent, not temporarily expedient, feature of the Nicaraguan political order.[14]

Whether and how these contradictions will be resolved is an open question. What is certain, however, is that both internal and external pressures bear directly on the central conflict—between authoritarian tendencies and those that favor political decentralization and pluralism. The elections have clearly benefited the latter; the Sandinistas have proved, again and again, to be susceptible to internal and external political pressure. Political opposition has not only been legitimized—it has acquired a firmer institutional basis. Tolerance, competition, and negotiations are the yeast for the growth of democratic pluralism in Nicaragua, both within the formal setting of the National (cum Constitutional) Assembly and outside it (the "National Dialogue"). These tendencies may, if encouraged, survive and prevail. Without such encouragement the opposite tendencies are likely to reassert themselves—with a vengeance.

The lack of an effective structure of checks and balances is, of course, dangerous. There are, however, countervailing forces that in a country like Nicaragua pull toward a more consensual political system. These include the presence of a largely conservative Catholic population, the pervasive hostility (noted by all observers) to anything smacking of Somoza-type terror and regimentation, the continuing split within the Sandinista leadership between moderates and hard-liners, and the country's dependence, both economically and politically, on outside powers.[15]

This brings me back to the United States. In its concluding paragraph the LASA report asserts that "the future of freedom and democracy in Nicaragua rests primarily in the hands of the United States." Precisely: the U.S. government could, if it had the requisite wisdom and nonideological flexibility, devise a program of incentives and sanctions capable of moving Nicaragua—desperately in need of economic markets and capital—toward greater pluralism and democracy. The U.S. government can also crush such a movement, if not by military intervention then by creating a situation where the Sandinistas, faced by an escalating war and forced to divert meager economic resources into defense, would scuttle such fledgling institutions as the National Assembly and initiate repressive and even totalitarian controls.

Recent events are not encouraging. On January 18 the Reagan administration, citing "security reasons," announced its boycott of the World Court's hearings on Nicaragua's complaint of U.S. support for the Contras. (A "senior U.S. official in Central America" told

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the LASA delegation that "the United States is not obliged to apply the same standard of judgment to a country whose government is avowedly hostile to the U.S. as for a country, like El Salvador, where it is not" [LASA, p. 32].)

On January 20 the *Washington Post* ran a long story by Dana Priest on U.S. efforts to block a $60.3 million loan by the Inter-American Development Bank to Nicaragua—a loan, incidentally, aimed at providing financial credits for small and medium-size farmers in the country's private sector. (No such objections have been voiced against an impending loan to Paraguay; after all, Paraguay may be a haven for Nazis, but it is not "hostile to the U.S.") And on Jan. 24, according to the *New York Times* on Jan. 25, Reagan reached the nadir of Orwellian double-talk by dubbing aid to the Contras "an act of self-defense." The Sandinistas, he said, are "violating international law" by presumably engaging in aggression with the help of "Colonel Qaddafi's Libya, the PLO, and most recently, the Ayatollah Khomeini." Proof? None.

On the same day the Socialist prime minister of Spain, Felipe González, issued a statement praising Daniel Ortega's inaugural speech, which affirmed the government's commitment to political pluralism. González also pointed to the presence at the inauguration of Roman Catholic bishops (the invocation was given by Pablo Antonio Vega, president of the Bishops' Conference and a bitter critic of the regime in the past), all of which he took as signs of "clear efforts of flexibility on Nicaragua's part. . . . Nicaragua might now be moving toward a pluralist democracy." The United States, he said, might miss a "historic opportunity" to end the mounting crisis in the isthmus.

The trouble, of course, is that Sr. Gonzales, like the Pope, has no divisions—while Mr. Reagan has plenty. And the ultimate irony of Reagan's reliance on these divisions may well be that he will one day be accused of "losing" Nicaragua, much as other administrations have been pilloried for "losing" China, Indochina—or, for that matter, Eastern Europe.

February 1, 1985

Notes

[1] In June 1940, as a young boy, I witnessed such an exercise in democracy, when the citizens of Lithuania were ordered—literally at gunpoint—to affirm their approval for their country's inclusion into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

[2] For revealing, if off-the-record, statements by Administration officials on this point, see "Administration Hardens Its Stance on Nicaragua," *Washington Post*, Dec. 17, 1984.

[3] For some recent reports on Contra atrocities, see "The Contras' Litany of Destruction," by Jonathan Steele and Tony Jenkins, *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, Nov. 25, 1984; "Doctors Assess Grim Cost of Nicaragua War," by Stephen Kinzer, *New York Times*, Oct. 8, 1984; "Anti-Sandinista Rebels Wage Brutal War in Nicaragua," by John Lee Anderson, *San Diego Union*, Sept. 28, 1984; and "Rebel, Sandinista Ambushes Viewed as Intensifying War," by Robert J. McCartney, *Washington Post*, Dec. 6, 1984.

[4] For a detailed survey of Washington-Managua negotiations, see "Nicaragua: America's Diplomatic Charade," by Roy Gutman, *Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.), Fall 1984.

[5] The WOLA delegation, for example, included Ben Stephansky, former U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state and former ambassador to Bolivia; James Shannon, congressman from Massachusetts (D); and Charles Whalen, former congressman from Ohio (R).

[6] The SCE's president, Mariano Fiallos, is not a Sandinista—formally or otherwise—of which I was fully convinced after a three-hour conversation with him last year in Nicaragua.

[7] See my article "Cautious Optimism in Nicaragua," *New Leader*, April 30, 1984.

[8] In his article "Nicaragua's Untold Stories," *New Republic*, Oct. 3, 1984, Robert S. Leiken claimed that disaffected Nicaraguans considered it "dangerous to speak openly" with foreigners, unless they were sure of the latter's antiregime views. The evidence in the reports is completely at odds with this assertion.

[9] *Barricada* (Managua)—International Edition (in English), Sept. 17, 1984.

[10] The FSLN has not cornered the market on stupid behavior. Before Arce rejected Cruz's terms, Mario Rappaccioli, one of Cruz's Conservative aides, told the press that Cruz "did not intend to run and was interested only in discrediting the elections" (Chitnis, p. 11). I'm not surprised. When I saw Rappaccioli in Managua and asked him to describe his party's program, he replied: "We stand for four freedoms—you know, like

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your President Roosevelt: freedom of religion, freedom of expression, freedom for private enterprise, and . . . shit, I forgot the last freedom."

[11] In response to demands from the political opposition, including the Coordinadora, the FSLN initiated a "National Dialogue" on October 31, 1984. More than 30 organizations—political parties, unions, and professional societies—took part. The purpose was to discuss basic problems about Nicaragua's political future, such as separation of party and state, religious freedom, human rights, future elections, and so on. The "dialogue" was suspended after several meetings, as a result of considerable differences between the Coordinadora and other parties (not only the FSLN). As of this writing, the "dialogue" has not been resumed.

[12] There was also an abstentionist faction within the PCD; it failed.

[13] For comments on the "leftism" of 1981–82, see my article, *New Leader*, April 30, 1984.

[14] David Nolan, *FSLN: The Ideology of the Sandinistas and the Nicaraguan Revolution* (Coral Gables, Fla.: Univ. of Miami Press, 1984) chap. 7.

[15] There is considerable dissension within the Directorate, which goes back to the pre-1979 period when the FSLN was split into several ideological factions. □

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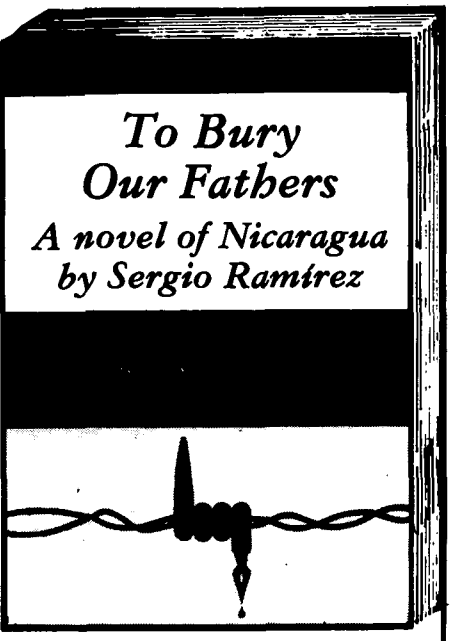

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Robert B. Reich

Prescriptions from the Right

LOSING GROUND: AMERICAN SOCIAL POLICY 1950–1980, by Charles Murray. New York: Basic Books. 324 pp. $23.95.

Charles Murray's *Losing Ground: American Social Policy 1950–1980* is a fierce polemic about the failure of Great Society liberalism to improve the lot of America's poor.

Murray's argument comes in three parts. In the first part he contends that precisely as the federal government's cash outlays for the needy increased between 1950 and 1980, a steadily greater number of Americans became impoverished. The same perverse correlation crops up when Murray looks at poverty programs in detail: as Labor Department work and training programs grew, so did unemployment among the poor; as federal money poured into education for the disadvantaged, their test scores declined; as welfare programs burgeoned, so did urban crime, illegitimacy, and the number of families permanently dependent on welfare.

In the second part of the book Murray offers an explanation. He contends that everything grew worse because the poverty programs made them worse. Welfare programs such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) created welfare dependency because they discouraged poor people from getting married and holding steady jobs. Liberal criminal-law reforms during the era reduced risks attendant on committing crimes. Permissive educational reforms made it more difficult for teachers to keep order in the schools. "All these changes in the incentives pointed in the same direction," Murray writes,

> It was easier to get along without a job. It was easier for a man to have a baby without being responsible for it, for a woman to have a baby without having a husband. It was easier to get away with crime. Because it was easier for others to get away with crime, it was easier to obtain drugs. Because it was easier to get away with crime, it was easier to support a drug habit. Because it was easier to get along without a job, it was easier to ignore education. Because it was easier to get along without a job, it was easier to walk away from a job and thereby accumulate a record as an unreliable employee.

At the same time, liberal society was destroying all the status rewards of hard work and achievement among the poor. After the late 1960s, it was assumed that if you were poor and dependent on a combination of welfare and crime, you were not to blame; the "system" drove you to it. On the other hand, if you were poor and managed to escape from welfare and crime, you deserved no praise, for you were merely benefiting from racial quotas and other special programs designed to lift you out of poverty.

The third part of Murray's argument is a prescription for what to do about poverty in America: Nothing. He counsels that any social transfer inevitably increases the net value of being in the condition that prompted the transfer in the first place. Hence it is impossible to assign aid to a category of needy people without creating perverse incentives for others to join the category. And the easier it is to get into that category—the smaller the sacrifice required to join—the more perverse the result will be. So the only answer is to scrap it all. Get rid of the entire federal-income and welfare-support structure for working-aged persons, including AFDC, Medicaid, Food Stamps, subsidized housing, and the rest. Instead, rely on local voluntary services and unemployment insurance to pick up the real hardship cases. Give poor parents

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educational vouchers with which they can shop for their children's schools. And, along the way, repeal every bit of legislation and reverse every court decision that requires or awards differential treatment according to race.

There will be a temptation, particularly for readers of this journal, to dismiss the book out of hand as the work of yet another apologist for the current retrograde drift of American politics. The themes of the book are grimly familiar. George Gilder, Milton Friedman, and various mouthpieces of the Heritage Foundation have been warning for years of the corrosive effects of the welfare state upon the incentives for the poor to work and maintain families. Evangelical soldiers of the New Right have long been equating permissiveness with moral decay. America's growing class of young, moderately affluent, professional and technical workers have shown increasing responsiveness to any arguments tending to legitimate their self-absorption. And much of the rest of America is anxious to assuage its collective guilt about cutting back welfare programs in order to pay for Reagan's military buildup and his tax cuts for the middle class and well-to-do.

It would be a mistake for those on the left to ignore this book. For it is far more than a polemic. Murray's arguments are tightly drawn. His writing is lucid. He marshals data carefully. He explores alternative hypotheses. The book is peppered with charts, and it contains a long appendix brimming with figures and references. In short, it makes a strong case. It will often be cited. It will make up part of the new conventional wisdom about the nature of poverty. For the left to dismiss this book is to allow it to dominate mainstream discussion for years to come.

CAREFULLY DISSECTED, Murray's three-part argument has several analytic weaknesses. The first part, in which Murray tries to correlate federal spending on the poor with a rise in poverty, rests upon some questionable assumptions about what categories of aid really have gone to the poor. Two of my colleagues at Harvard, David Ellwood and Lawrence Summers, recently examined the data on cash assistance to the nonelderly poor and found very little real increase between 1970 and 1980—from $13.5 billion to $18.9 billion (in constant 1980 dollars), which translates into just $93 per nonelderly poor person over the entire decade.

Indeed, the real value of AFDC benefits (the only cash assistance program for the nonelderly, nondisabled poor) has fallen sharply since 1976. There were fewer people in the program in 1980 (before the Reagan budget cuts) than in 1972, despite a dramatic increase in the number of people living in single-parent families. This is because real benefit levels shrank by close to 25 percent. The dramatic increases in social spending that took place between 1970 and 1980 were primarily in social insurance programs whose benefits went overwhelmingly to the middle class. Unemployment insurance, workmen's compensation, Social Security disability, and Medicare for the disabled together cost $56 billion in 1980, up from $25 billion a decade before. This is not the first time that America's middle class has been adept at channeling to itself funds ostensibly earmarked for the less fortunate.

Murray's explanation is equally suspect. A hoary rule of social science holds that correlations—even if present—do not imply causation. One is reminded of the apocryphal researcher who discovered that the number of fires in a certain municipality over a ten-year period was directly related to the number of fire engines the city owned; as the fleet of fire engines expanded, the number of fires increased. His conclusion: fire engines cause fires. Murray's logic suffers from a similar difficulty. Even if it is assumed that federal spending on the poor increased over the same period that poverty grew, there is no reason to suppose that the former *caused* the latter. Causation may have run in the opposite direction, like the fires and the fire engines: the poverty programs might have come as a response to growing poverty.

If the line of causation ran in the opposite direction from what Murray suggests, we would need another explanation for why poverty appears to have increased after the late 1960s. Murray discusses and dismisses several alternative hypotheses, but there is one he doesn't fully grapple with. Beginning in about 1965, American productivity started to slow down. Before then, the output of the average American worker was increasing about 3 percent each year. By the late 1960s productivity improvements averaged about 2 percent a year. By the mid-1970s they were down to 1 percent. As a result *real* wages began to level off.

In real terms, median family income in 1980 was no higher than it was in 1969. Simultaneously, 20 million postwar baby boomers entered the work force, along with 5 million middle-aged women. The two sets of data—the productivity slowdown and the army of new entrants—are partly related, of course. The new entrants lacked the skills necessary to be highly productive; and many wives entered the work force to help maintain family incomes (and aspirations) as their husbands' real

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incomes sank. The point was, there is a lot of new competition for jobs and income. And who was at the end of the queue? You guessed it: the same people who are always at the end of the queue—the poor, mostly black, mostly inner-city. Poverty increased—or, more accurately, the plight of the nonelderly poor stopped improving—because the queue lengthened. Had the government done less for the poor, poverty would have been worse.

There is nothing particularly surprising about this result. The bottom fifth of all American families has continued to get about 6 percent of all total personal income every year over the past 20. So as the average American family's income leveled off in the 1970s, the income of the poor also could be expected to level off. And as competition for jobs increased, unemployment among poor minorities—the least competitive—could be expected to rise. The extra $93 per poor person distributed over the decade in cash assistance would not dramatically alter this outcome.

If Murray's data are questionable and his logic is suspect, then the third part of this argument, in which he recommends that we abolish the welfare state, surely is invalid. And yet, in certain aspects I found this last section to be the most intriguing, for it touches on issues of program design and administration that are rarely raised explicitly. Murray's argument does not support the proposition that we abolish welfare, of course. But it does suggest that we rethink how welfare is provided, and how society—through its welfare programs, affirmative action programs, and the police and educational services—indirectly confers status and responsibility within a community. For however much we wish to disagree with Murray and find holes in his premises, there surely is some truth to the notion that many of these interventions have signaled to impoverished people—particularly young black males—that there is little point in trying to escape from a life of welfare and crime.

Progressive defenders of poverty programs, like conservative critics, spend too much time arguing over the programs' merits, and too little worrying about how they should be designed and administered. Implementation is a messy and difficult subject, lying far below the lofty ideological plane on which broad propositions about the "American system" are sounded. And yet, it is here that the real work will be—must be—undertaken to improve the system incrementally.

How should poverty programs be designed and run? Murray asserts that there is no way to avoid the trap of perverse incentives. He bases his assertion on hypotheses about the impossibility of creating categories of beneficiaries that do not directly induce others into the same dependent state. But he is patently wrong. What about benefits that are expressly conditioned upon work and sacrifice, such as the various "work fare" experiments now in effect? If AFDC beneficiaries had to enroll their children in day care or Head Start and simultaneously enroll themselves in a training program or work at a public service job, few if any perverse incentives would result. Surely, there are many ways in which poverty programs could be conditioned upon affirmative obligations designed to reduce welfare dependency rather than increase it.

And what about benefits that are really investments in the future capacities of poor people to take care of themselves? To cite but one example, there is now convincing evidence that a ghetto child who begins school at age three or four has a far better chance of growing up to be a motivated, independent citizen than a child who begins school at the age of five. Researchers who tracked the lives of 123 impoverished black children in Ypsilanti, Michigan, over the past 15 years discovered a clear pattern. Those who were given one to two years of high-quality preschool education stayed in school longer, had better earnings prospects, were

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less involved in crime, and got pregnant less often than their peers who began school later.

Quite apart from the weaknesses in his data and analysis, Murray premises his arguments on a unidimensional view of social relationships. He assumes that the most important incentives that a society can hold out to its poorest members are negative ones: "Do not study, and we will throw you out of school; commit crimes, and we will put you in jail; do not work, and we will make sure that your existence is so uncomfortable that any job will be preferable to it." But this view ignores what is perhaps the most powerful of social incentives: the desire for *membership*—the need to belong, to be respected and accepted, to contribute and have one's contributions appreciated. A society that can hold out to its poorest citizens the genuine prospect of full membership will succeed in bringing most of them along. A society that cannot make such a commitment will fail to. Charles Murray's elegant but flawed book should be taken as a challenge to make America's poverty programs the first step toward such an American ideal. □

Charles E. Lindblom

Paths to Equality

THE ECONOMIC ILLUSION: FALSE CHOICES BETWEEN PROSPERITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE, by Robert Kuttner. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 278 pp. $19.95.

With few exceptions—among them Robert Kuttner, whose book I here applaud—everyone who has been taught that remarkable mixture of cognitive crippling and liberating illumination called economic theory "knows" that equality and efficiency are at odds with each other. No society, they believe, can go far down the road toward distributive justice without losing incentives and the other efficiencies sustainable only through inequality.

They so believe because the efficiency-equality conflict is an early lesson in elementary courses in economics, repeated in increasingly ritualistic declamation at progressively higher levels of training in economics. There it takes on the character of those axiomatic beliefs that divide competent from incompetent economists.

For all we know, it is no more than a sophisticated old-wives' tale. Curiously, the fundamental conflict between equality and efficiency has never been demonstrated—or even near-demonstrated. Nor, in the intellectual tradition of economic theory, has it been seriously investigated. Obviously, differential economic rewards stimulate effort; and from this plausible intuition many people, including many economists, have jumped—an enormous jump—to the conclusion that the less the economic differential, the less the effort. Would they also say the more the differential, the more the effort? No, not as a broad generalization, for they know that too much differential can weaken morale, create disruptive social antagonisms, even immediately and directly undercut the incentives of those at the economic bottom, for whom the grossness of the differentials makes their own positions seem hopeless.

If differentials can be so great as to interfere with efficiency, how can these true believers know that the differentials we see about us today are not too great? Can they really know that inequality of income and wealth is not today an obstruction to efficiency? As just noted, economists do not seriously study that question; and for many of them their professional folktales seem to satisfy.

Some economists acknowledge the possibility—even probability—that cautious moves in the direction of equality might not reduce efficiency. If carefully designed, some reductions in inequality might even raise it. But they go on to say that any moves that approach equality at all closely will clearly reduce efficiency. They hold that both near-equality or complete equality, if either can be imagined, can confidently be declared to be in conflict with efficiency.

Again, the case has never been made; and that it needs to be made—unless economists are willing to stop generalizing on the issue—is hardly recognized. What, then, holds up this edifice of belief? At base, it is an argument to the effect that people brought up in market or capitalist societies and taught a set of expectations consonant with such societies seem to need the reward patterns of those societies to keep them moving.

Such an argument sheds little light on what kinds of incentives would move people in the event of substantial structural change in economic or

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social organization, change of a character that would alter not only the pattern of incentives but the inclinations of people to respond. The illogic of the conventional line of belief is clear: it contemplates a drastically different future in which the incentive system is altered without simultaneously contemplating the effect or direction of possible changes in dispositions that so drastic a change would bring about.

THAT RESEARCH AND THOUGHTFUL ANALYSIS on hypothetical circumstances are possible, even though economists wholly neglect them, is evident in recent studies, appearing in a variety of journals, of the political scientist and psychologist Robert E. Lane—see, for example, his "Waiting for Lefty" in *Theory and Society* (vol. 6, 1978).

The iron grip on economic thought of the conventional doctrine positing conflict between justice and growth, as Kuttner puts the issue in his title, was once more demonstrated in the late Arthur Okun's widely read *Equality and Efficiency: The Big Trade-Off*. The book was a contest, Kuttner nicely observes, between Okun's "egalitarian instincts as a citizen and his inegalitarian training as a professional economist."

Many well-off people presumably feel good in their belief in "the big trade-off." Their advantages in income and wealth, which they must at least sometimes feel are vulnerable to attack in a world increasingly given to egalitarian causes and ideologies, are sanctioned by the trade-off doctrine. For some people, their minds were long ago simply set by repeated assurances that the trade-off is a rock-bottom social-scientific proposition, a modern analytical successor to the biblical "The poor ye have always with you."

In recent years, two unusual theoretical studies challenge conventional thinking, insofar as these resistances permit the challenge to be recognized. One is David Schweickart's *Capitalism or Worker Control?* (New York: Praeger, 1980). His first chapter is a strikingly original diagnosis of how economists think about income distribution. The other is Joseph Caren's *Equality, Moral Incentives, and the Market* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), which examines the theoretical possibility of using the incentives of a market system without any income differentials, a possibility largely dismissed in economics as no more promising than perpetual motion.

IN KUTTNER'S BOOK, the reconsideration of conventional thinking on equality and efficiency is given a further push by the pragmatic concreteness of his analysis and abundant empirical evidence. Examining the U.S., Britain, West Germany, Japan, Austria, and Sweden, he finds that movement toward equality in hard fact has promoted rather than obstructed growth. The social mechanisms that make possible a reconciliation between equality and efficiency he examines in detail in chapters on capital, on savings, labor, trade, taxes, and social welfare. In effect, he asks us to set the old doctrinal and ideological debate aside and simply look at the facts. These he has thoughtfully assembled. Although quietly put, the argument and evidence repeatedly jolt—how could we have, one must ask, so steadily misread the world around us?

His empirical findings alone let in fresh air. Repeatedly he shows that conflicts between equality and efficiency are the consequences of poor policy design rather than inevitabilities. Some countries do much better than others in reconciling the two. As for the U.S.,

> Other nations have managed to combine broader welfare protections with higher rates of savings and investment and more rapid growth, by blending different ingredients into a superior social bargain.

What "bargain"? Just what does he mean? In Sweden and Austria, a bargain is explicit in the form of a resolution by representatives of business, labor, and government, of issues about wages, employment, productivity, and prices. In some other countries, the U.S. included, the bargain is more implicit than explicit. But it is the concept of a bargain that Kuttner uses to unify his findings about national differences in the reconciliation of equality and efficiency. For those readers who wish a theoretical explanation of Kuttner's empirical observations, the bargain is the key concept. As he puts it:

> Egalitarian societies have an interest in devising social bargains that reconcile equality with economic performance. Unequal societies tend to resist such positive-sum bargains, for their leaders have a material and ideological stake in perpetuating inequalities. In such societies, equity-enhancing social bargains are shunned—not because they would harm growth but because they would transform relationships of privilege and power.

He goes on to say:

> As it turns out, there is one set of economic bargains in the industrial countries with strong labor and social democratic roots and quite a different set in countries where labor movements are weak or divided and business ideologies are dominant. It will surprise many conservatives and neoclassical economists to learn that positive-sum gains tend to be

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statistically superior in societies where labor and business operate more as equals and where egalitarian values are better entrenched. In practice, redistributive measures take more of a toll on economic efficiency when they are carried out grudgingly, in the inhospitable climate of business supremacy and social conflict.

If Kuttner is largely diagnostic rather than prescriptive, diagnoses nevertheless imply or point to possible prescriptions; and in fact Kuttner makes explicit the main line of prescription he would like to see the U.S. follow. For those many liberals and liberal/radicals who have been searching for the new program that they believe will someday take the place of a now largely exhausted tradition begun with the New Deal, look here. It is the most fruitful set of programmatic ideas I have seen. □

Paul Berman

A Bloody Critic

RECORD OF A LIFE: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH, by Georg Lukács. Edited by István Eörsi, translated by Rodney Livingstone. London: Verso (distributed by Schocken). 204 pp. Paper $7.95.

Georg Lukács wanted to write his autobiography shortly before he died in 1971, but his health wouldn't permit it. Instead, he jotted an autobiographical sketch and gave a long interview to a couple of his students. One of them, István Eörsi, has combined these materials with earlier interviews and presented the results as *Record of a Life*. Naturally the book is jumpy and fragmentary. But no one can say it lacks dramatic events.

Lukács was a man of action, indeed a man of violence, though it seems odd to say this. In 1919 he joined the Communist revolution in Hungary, which established what must be the most culturally distinguished dictatorship in modern times (dictatorship is Lukács's own term for the regime). He became commissar for education; Bartók, Kodály, and Dohnányi were the commissars for music. And the commissar for education tells us that he voted to execute two men at a Central Committee meeting. During the war with Romania, he served as political commissar in the army and ordered eight of his own men executed in a public square.

LUKÁCS SPENT MUCH OF HIS LIFE a hairbreadth away from his own execution. The left-wing dictatorship was overthrown and he had to hide in an upstairs loft while police searched the apartment. His wealthy family hired an army officer to drive him out of the country, with Lukács disguised as the chauffeur—only since he couldn't drive, he feigned an injury and the officer took the wheel. From exile, he was ordered back to Hungary by Béla Kun, the leader of the Hungarian Communists, to take charge of underground agitation. Six months of clandestine meetings and fear and trembling followed, with Lukács convinced that Kun planned to get him conveniently martyred. He moved to Moscow, where the danger facing prominent Communists was hardly less severe. And again he managed to survive, this time through what he believed were four pieces of good luck: because he had useful contacts high in party circles; because those contacts didn't happen to include Zinoviev or Bukharin; because he was fortunate enough to have lost the factional struggle against Kun in the Hungarian Communist movement (it was Kun who got executed); and because his Moscow apartment was unenviable. The crucial motive to liquidate Comrade Lukács didn't exist. Even so, he spent two months under Soviet arrest during his Moscow exile.

The return to Hungary after the war made life no more secure. Lukács kept a low profile, as wisdom dictated, but in 1956 he rejoined the government almost in a replay of 1919, this time as commissar for culture. When the new revolution was overthrown he tried defecting to Yugoslavia, which he later regretted. And back he went into Soviet internment (in a prison that happened to be Dracula's Transylvanian castle, a fact unrecorded in *Record of a Life*). This time it was Imre Nagy who got executed.

A peculiar psychological portrait emerges from Lukács's account of these events. The urge to rebel and the urge to remain obedient evidently pulled at him with equal strength. His father was a self-made banker, against whom Lukács rebelled by becoming a Communist—yet not so angrily as to make his father turn against him. There's a hint that perhaps the family took pride in what a *good* Communist their son had become. Meanwhile obedient loyalty made him a good Communist indeed,

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no matter how hard his comrades tried to get him killed.

Loyalty was an aspect even of his philosophical work, since one of his main themes was an insistence on Marxism as a total vision of life, requiring no external additives. He seems to have judged other writers less by how astute they were than by how thoroughly they remained within the system. He boasts at one point that his own Marxism was entirely pure, with no bourgeois alloy. To be sure, loyalty led to some asinine judgments. He told the *New Left Review*, in an interview included in the book, that he "always thought the worst form of socialism was better to live in than the best form of capitalism."

A tension between rebellion and loyalty characterized Lukács's politics, too. He came to Marxism from anarcho-syndicalism, and ever after his political ideas contained a faintly libertarian or democratic streak. His "Blum Theses" in the late 1920s (Blum was his movement pseudonym) advocated democracy within the Communist movement as the correct form for Communist dictatorship over the rest of society. He was forced to renounce these Theses but says in *Record of a Life* that privately he never did change his position. In 1956 the democratic impulse came again to the forefront.

Yet it's hard to overestimate the faintness of this streak. He doesn't mention in *Record of a Life* that the Blum Theses also regarded social democracy as "a mainstay of fascism." He does say that in the factional struggles of the middle '20s he sided with Stalin against Zinoviev, whom he particularly hated, and also against Trotsky. He continued siding with Stalin right through the purge trials. It's daunting to discover that until the year of his death, Lukács persisted in believing that something about the purge trials must have been legitimate. He remained sure that Zinoviev and company really were in some fashion traitors. In philosophical matters, too, he never stopped citing Stalin's inspirational role, long after the practical advantages of bowing to the Soviet dictator had ended.

The book shows that Lukács went further in these ways than even a figure like Bertolt Brecht. Brecht was an authentic Communist, but always with an eye toward expedience. He preferred exile in Hollywood to exile in Moscow. He believed in Stalinism sincerely; but above all, he believed in it insincerely. Lukács was, of course, also an expedient man. Expedience was surely as useful as a bad apartment in helping him to survive. His books are full of grotesque kowtowings to authority. But while he believed in Stalinism insincerely, above all he believed in it sincerely. He hated the West with a passion; he would never have followed Brecht's example.

How to explain such a man? Search the *Record of a Life*, and you will find no great display of introspection or personal analysis. Freudianism, as he says, had no appeal to him. He insists he was never afflicted with neurosis. An explanation of the man's character and behavior must come from somewhere else—perhaps from *The Historical Novel*, which he wrote in Moscow. In this work he discussed epic heroes in the novels of Walter Scott. A Scottian hero is a man, usually from a doomed social class rooted in the past, who gets caught in a vast social struggle and therefore reflects all the great historical currents of his time. That is, if Scott had ever written about farmers versus cowboys, the hero would have been an Indian.

The Lukács we see in *Record of a Life* is such a man. The vast social struggle pitted the feudal past against the Communist future in Central and Eastern Europe, and the doomed social class rooted in the past was the Jewish intelligentsia. Lukács's autobiographical sketch makes a point of denying the significance of his Jewish background: "Of pure Jewish family. For that very reason: the ideologies of Judaism had no influence whatever on my spiritual development." So says the man who called himself "Blum." But one may conclude that, like all paradoxical statements, this particular paradox is untrue. For there were, of course, a great many "Blums" in Eastern and Central Europe—intellectuals emerging from Jewish backgrounds who helped articulate the ideas of the Communist future and who played major roles in bringing that future to pass, and who then discovered that it offered them as little place in society as the feudal past had once offered; and surely these people were as much influenced by their background as any other social class.

Lukács played the part of vanguard intellectual with absolute certainty of conviction. Like Trotsky, he couldn't help believing that Marxism was his birthright, that he himself personified its values and ideas, that all rivals and critics were pretenders and fakes. His immense arrogance is visible in that remark about the purity of his Marxism. And it's true that the arrogant self-certainty gives his life a trace of something majestic. There was nothing petty about his highest aspirations. But since his position was essentially false, since in fact Communism was intent on crushing such aspirations, his life also looks tawdry and pathetic. So much talent, so much courage—in the service of so much evil, so much cowardice. As with a hero from Scott, each

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element of Lukács's personality reflected another aspect of the actual development of social forces over the course of his life; but since the actual development was none too appealing, neither, ultimately, is Lukács, not even when he presents himself in the best possible light. □

Judith B. Walzer

After the Movement

CIVIL WARS, by Rosellen Brown. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 419 pp. $16.95

In *Civil Wars*, Rosellen Brown has created a remarkable personal view of the long-term effect of the 1960s civil rights movement on two of its participants. Teddy Carll, a native Mississippian, and Jessie Singer, a "red-diaper baby" from New York, meet and marry in the movement. They settle in Mississippi, to live their lives, to work, raise children, and try to "keep the faith."

This is not a favored or common subject in recent fiction. American politics, difficult in any case for novelists to get a handle on, has seemed especially elusive in its more radical forms. Even the civil rights movement, so full of public images of fellowship and actual accomplishment, has not yet provided us with art reflecting that political experience. There have been novels by both blacks and whites about the South and the social conditions that provided the grounds for the movement, but except for Alice Walker's attempts at mythmaking in *Meridian*, the movement has not been expressed through the imagination of writers who lived through it.

Did disillusion set in too quickly, once the first milestones of progress had been passed? Was the reality that young activists faced later on too complex and difficult for them to handle in life and in art? Certainly, the movement changed the face of America. But then for black Americans—as for all of us—it didn't change it nearly enough, leaving a society still fractured by racial inequality. Laws changed, as did political organizations, and blacks began to determine their own political course. But the movement as a movement did not sustain itself, and the dream of an integrated America in which all would be equal disappeared as a unifying political goal. The movement's elite troops retreated or disbanded, not knowing where or how to start new battles.

Rosellen Brown's novel tries to assess this retreat and its consequences (with some over-the-shoulder glances at the movement itself) and to confront what happens to political activists when the dust settles. Her task, as she has charted it for herself, is an unenviable one, for the downward progression—from heightened consciousness and moral excitement to the routines of daily life—is inevitable and might be dampening. How can one, after all, be expected to struggle to become an adult and construct a life, with only a past to imitate and nothing but disappointments in the present? The Carlls mean to hold fast to their political faith and experience, deciding to stay in Mississippi and live in a newly integrated neighborhood. But over the ensuing 15 years, the neighborhood becomes all black except for themselves, and their erstwhile comrades in integration make it abundantly clear that they are not wanted: "heavy breathers" call in the night, someone puts skewers in their son's bicycle tires and sugar in their gas tank. The neighbors want the house for "one of their own."

THE DIFFERENT ways in which Teddy and Jessie respond to the reality of the 1980s defines them as characters and shapes the central conflict of the novel. Teddy yearns for the political past, the ideas and the passion that swept him into action. A former hero, he cannot tolerate the indistinctness of the present. Jessie, on the other hand, is rooted in her present life, committed to its responsibilities and limits. She cannot yearn for a past when the present demands her attention, and she views with skepticism the possibilities for a radical politics of the kind they once knew.

The struggle between their views—between heroic ideals and dreams on one side and events of ordinary existence on the other—provides the substance of the novel. From the start Brown chooses sides so that the battle is not an equal one. The action of the novel appears through Jessie's acute and painful perceptions of the present and unsparing analysis of that heroic past from which Teddy cannot extricate himself.

The conflict between the Carlls—albeit a clear difference of political opinion—replicates a familiar construction of the "division of labor" in such conflicts: men are linked to abstraction and action,

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women to ordinary realities and the demands of personal life. To have set the argument of the novel in this mold was a risk. We might be tempted to dismiss the conflict as merely a domestic banality. The risk of losing Teddy as a character is greater still, for Brown does not flinch from his faults nor the way in which his illusions about political life determine his reluctance to face the world as it is. But Brown succeeds, I think, because of her powerful grasp of these lives and her imaginative reconstruction of the political wilderness in which they wander.

Into this "civil" (yet uncivil) war comes a family crisis as well as some political and natural disasters. The family crisis is precipitated by a tragic accident: Teddy's sister and brother-in-law die in an automobile crash and their two children (Helen 13, O'Neill 8) become the Carlls' responsibility as "next of kin." The children's mother was at best a conventional Southern conservative totally opposed to Teddy's political beliefs and involvements. Their father, as revealed through his daughter's memories, was a fanatical racist and a brutally destructive man.

The daughter's memories and reflections on the strange world she has entered (as she is nearing a breakdown and a suicide attempt) are interpolated in the text of the novel as her diary. Brown again takes risks here—this time artistic and psychological ones—not only with the interior monologue of the diary itself, its repetitiveness and desperate confusions, but with her effort to reproduce the texture of early adolescence and its capacity for extremes of self-dramatization. Again, I think the risk pays off. She is able to be particularly attentive, as Jessie herself is, to the children in the novel and captures their perspectives.

Characteristically, Jessie deals with these two children, trying to make them part of the family (the Carlls have two children of their own), trying to understand—though not always effectively—the reality of their loss. Teddy tries to escape into sporadic, futile, and sometimes dangerous political activities and into nostalgic self-indulgence, thereby widening the rift in the family. When Helen is lost in the natural disaster of the story (a spring flood that nearly drowns the new, white suburb into which they've finally moved), her diary is found. After Teddy reads it, he responds:

> Do you know what Helen's always made me want to do? . . . I want to pinch her arm when she's sitting there picking at her food the way she does. That's a diabolical thing to say but I want to pinch her till she screams. She's one of those empty Southern girls I grew up with . . . she's voiceless like a little cutout doll or something, and all I can think to do is hit her or pull her hair or make her *react* somehow. . . .

Jessie recoils from Teddy's view of Helen and his focus on himself. "She's a child and you're not a child," she snaps, "You're responsible for your thoughts and actions in a way she just isn't prepared to be." From his perspective, Jessie's view is finally too hard on him and too determined to do right in each small instance. In the final scene of the novel, after they find Helen and the family is ostensibly reunited, Jessie thinks of her own feelings: "Damn. She was going to bring them all pain." It is clear that all that has been broken in understanding and sympathy between the Carlls is unlikely to be mended.

In its way the novel is a difficult one, but not because of anything it tries to say. It is simply the kind of fiction that relies on the cumulative weight and effect of ordinary detail, meticulously observed, with great psychological precision. Brown is painstaking with the subject and fearless, even ruthlessly so, with the conflict between her two main characters. What the novel does not offer us—granted Jessie's critical view of Teddy's politics—is any direct sense of what a more authentic politics might be like and where, in this case, the civil rights movement might have gone in the '70s. There are some hints. In an argument about black activism with a friend (a black woman lawyer who continues the struggle in her daily job), Teddy is accused of not being able to adapt to the long struggle, the beginning: "Of something you can't deal with, Teddy love. Of a long quiet time and unflamboyant action and behind-the-scenes tinkering, and that isn't visible enough for you." Similarly, as Jessie reflects on her own on the question of public and private life, she thinks:

> It was time that did it all, they floated in it, in its solution, and everything disintegrated slowly as if it were water. There was public time—at a sufficient distance it was called history—and there was private time that beat like a small hot heart inside the body of that history. All those fluttering, failing hearts, trying only to sustain one body at a time. You couldn't escape the public part, you were in it and it in you—like DDT in an apple, maybe, part of each cell as it grew . . . . But you could escape the private, apparently: Teddy could by vanishing . . . .

The reader hopes there is a connection between these views—that it is possible to undertake the long-term struggle, that "long quiet time and unflamboyant action," even as one realizes the tensions between the public and the private parts of history. But what the solution to the problem is—

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the problem of reconciling political struggles with the intensity of personal life and its perspective on history—is not part of the story that Brown has written. We only know that the solution, in her terms, has to be reached without denying the ties that bind us to the real world and our perceptions of it. It must be reached through a more complete sense of responsibility to who we are and what we see, rather than by turning away from those basic facts of life to a series of abstractions and artifices.

Brown's view is implicitly antiromantic, and in some sense anti-ideological, but not of necessity inimical to politics. It is the politics of revolutionary gestures, inappropriate and outworn, that Brown is radically critical of. If this critical view is sometimes disturbing, it is also convincing. It points toward realism and authenticity as the indispensable core of any movement for social change.□

Alex Gordon

The Doctor Business

THE SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICAN MEDICINE, by Paul Starr. New York: Basic Books. 514 pp. $24.95.

The American physician has been portrayed, in turn, as snake-oil healer, charlatan, kindly old country doctor, and venerated high priest of the art of healing. Now, in a brutally changing world where vast corporations assume new power, he may be forced to say good-bye to his old independence.

There have been outstanding individuals in the profession, but the implications of the Hippocratic oath have not always controlled doctors' behavior. For many years organized medicine has frequently used its political clout against the day-to-day interests of patients in the real world. Paradoxically, some of the measures against which it battled have later proved to be a bonanza for the physician. The American Medical Association fought fiercely against health-insurance measures submitted in the 1935 Social Security Act, and to this day it has been successful in preventing a national health insurance system.

The AMA mobilized its forces in the early fight against Medicare, but when it became a part of Social Security, physicians discovered that the Medicare payments provided a substantial part of their income. They were also able to shape much of the Medicare establishment's policies and payments.

The rise and current status of the profession and the health-care structure are described in detail in Paul Starr's critical appraisal, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*. Starr, a Harvard sociologist, presents a portrait both of medicine's early struggles in the United States and its situation today. He also points out that in 18th-century England the physicians "stood only at the margins of the gentry class, struggling for the patronage of the rich in the hope of acquiring enough wealth to buy an estate and a title. . . ." An indication of the low esteem in which the profession was held in America, even in 1869, was a comment in a professional journal: "In all of our American colleges, medicine has ever been, and is now, the most despised of all the professions which liberally educated men are expected to enter. . . ."

In America's early days, not all those practicing medicine had formal training. Clergymen, for example, frequently combined medicine and religion in their services to the congregation. Then a move began to develop formal standards. In 1760, the first licensure law requiring prospective examination of physicians was passed in New York City. Yet the quality of the colleges of the period was deplorable. The theses of the students were "generally unoriginal and occasionally barely literate. . . . The examinations were easy, partly because professors were paid by a student only if he passed. While half-educated doctors were turned out, many unlicensed physicians also practiced. Medical schools, good, bad, and indifferent, grew rapidly. The medical societies found themselves contending with the medical schools. Each criticized the other.

With the considerable in-fighting among physicians and physicians' groups, together with the glaring deficiencies of many shoddy medical schools, the doctor's reputation was not a shining one. However, after the famous Flexner study in 1912, which thoroughly exposed the schools, many of them closed, and new standards improved the medical education system. In addition, advances in medical research and science contributed to better diagnosis and treatment and helped to elevate the doctor to an honored position in society.

TRACING THE DEVELOPMENT of American hospitals, Starr presents the growth of the private sector for

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acute treatment, and a public sector for chronic care. He also notes the early discrimination against Catholic and Jewish physicians in elite private hospitals. Meanwhile, some public officials used municipal hospitals to reward their faithful ward heelers with jobs.

IN THE 1930s, partly because of the influence of the Depression, the physicians' control of the hospitals began to be challenged by administrators. Meanwhile, the physicians had campaigned vigorously against public treatment of the sick, requirements for reporting cases of tuberculosis and venereal disease, and efforts of public health authorities to create health centers for preventive, curative medical services. Doctors also inveighed against the "corporate practice of medicine." They disliked the idea of corporations supplying medical treatment for their employees through "company physicians," a policy that directly hit the doctor's pocketbook. Railroads and mines were among the first companies to appoint company doctors.

While supposedly being above the fray, the doctors played political hardball. For many years, the American Medical Association, the chief organization of the physicians, controlled the number of medical schools, and thus could keep a rein on the number of doctors produced. The AMA and the state medical societies consistently protected their own interests. They fought continually against compulsory medical insurance, as that goal began to be debated more frequently in the country. Their power was recognized even by Franklin D. Roosevelt, who, in 1943, told a key Senate committee chairman: "We can't go up against the state medical societies, we just can't do it."

During World War II, the total enrollment in group hospital plans jumped from less than 7 million to about 26 million. Blue Cross held three-quarters of the market. Meanwhile, unions bargained for health-care provisions in their contracts. Most of the worker health plans expanded by companies during World War II were controlled by management. As of 1946, only about 600,000 workers were covered by union health plans. By the end of 1954, this had risen to 12 million workers and 17 million dependents. During this growth, solo physicians began to worry about the rapid growth of special group health-care plans, such as the Health Insurance Plan of New York (HIP) and Kaiser-Permanente on the West Coast. In the operation of Medicare, the national administration sought the cooperation of the hospitals and the doctors; here they "established buffers between the providers of health care and the federal bureaucracy. . . ." Thus Blue Cross was chosen as intermediary, both for Part A and Part B of Medicare. "As a result," says Starr, "the administration of Medicare was lodged in the private insurance systems originally extended to suit provider interests. . . ."

While attention began to be focused on hospital charges and doctor fees, a new development has appeared, the growth of hospital chain corporations. Until this time, physicians had been able to believe they were independent practitioners, masters of their own fate. This concept is now in shock.

The potential profits of such chains provided a fascinating lure. In 1980, the *New England Journal of Medicine* reported that the arrival of a new medical-industrial complex was "the most important health-care development of the day. . . ." One survey in 1980 found 176 systems owning or managing 294,199 hospital beds; the American Hospital Association, in another survey, counted 245 multihospital systems with 301,894 beds.

In 1980, the nonprofit hospital organizations operated 57.6 percent of the beds in multihospital systems; the investor-owned chain operated 35.1 percent, and public hospital systems (excluding federal systems) 7.3 percent. Starr documents the rapid growth of profit-making chains. In 1970, the largest for-profit system controlled 23 hospitals; by 1981, the same company, Hospital Corporation of America, owned or managed more than 300 hospitals, with 43,000 beds. In 1981, the chains owned or managed hospitals with 121,741 beds, up 68 percent over the total of 72,282 beds held five years earlier. In 1980 the second largest chain, Humana, had 92 hospitals and $1.4 billion in revenues.

Starr predicts that more doctors will go into group practice, more hospitals will come under the mantle of multihospital systems, and more insurance companies will be directly involved in health maintenance organizations (HMOs). The specter of corporate control of medicine now clearly is haunting the doctors, with a consequent loss of autonomy. Starr also sees the development of a corporate sector in health care as "likely to aggravate inequalities in access to health care." He points out that profit-making hospitals "are not interested in treating those who cannot pay. . . ." This signals a return to a two-care system—one for the poor, the other for the affluent. He adds that the profit-making hospitals will undoubtedly oppose any national health program that might threaten to "end private reimbursement."

WHAT DO THESE DEVELOPMENTS MEAN for American patients? They face unsettling changes in the coun-

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try's health-care structure, a change in the relationship with the doctor and the hospital, and the frightening shadow of ever-higher medical costs for diagnosis and treatment. Prospects for any immediate national health program are dim.

Starr warns that the "corporate health services industry will . . . represent a powerful force resisting public accountability and participation. . . ." To cope with this, the American public will have to exert greater efforts to protect its health care than it has yet managed to do. □

Zuzana Kohákova

Europe and Exile

THE ENGINEER OF HUMAN SOULS, by Josef Škvorecký. Translated from the Czech by Paul Wilson. New York: Knopf. 576 pp. $17.95.

By the time he was 45 years old, the Czech novelist Josef Škvorecký had survived a dizzying succession of political systems: Masaryk's democratic republic, the Nazi protectorate, the postwar social democratic republic, Stalinist rule after the 1948 coup, the humanist socialism of Dubček's Spring, and finally, in the weeks before his exile in 1969, Soviet occupation. His most recent novel, *The Engineer of Human Souls*, is something of a guided tour through the chaos of 20th-century European political history. For that reason alone it's a remarkable book.

Škvorecký abandons chronological narrative for a crazy quilt of scenes and events from four decades and several continents tumbled upon each other. We begin at the University of Toronto in the early 1970s. Daniel Smiřický, a Czech writer in exile, is teaching English literature to a motley crew of ignorant undergraduates, including an American draft dodger and a 19-year-old Scandinavian goddess whom Smiřický contemplates seducing. Lecherous thoughts of his student Irene set the middle-aged Smiřický drifting back into the past, to Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia and to Nadia, a poor village girl with whom he worked at forced labor in a Messerschmidt factory. He remembers now he once "burned with delight" for skinny Nadia whose black eyes glittered with tuberculosis, how he seduced her with the help of jam tarts, and how blithely he committed sabotage to impress her.

Smiřický's experiences in the vastly different worlds of Canadian academia after Vietnam and Czechoslovakia during the Second World War contribute two major strands to the novel. Other worlds are interwoven among them: the stultifyingly "hopeful" dawn in postwar Czechoslovakia, the wacky, dangerous, desperate-sad world of the Czech exiles in Toronto, and Prague literary life during the Dubček Spring.

These worlds are peopled by a large cast. There is Smiřický himself in his several incarnations, the middle-aged professor and the adolescent Danny. There is Irene, and there are Nadia and Marie and a dozen other girls whom Smiřický has pursued or been pursued by. There's a wealthy Canadian entrepreneur of culture, a Russian poet and his inarticulate interpreter, there are aged Czech legionnaires who fought in the First World War, an American Nazi, a priest turned state security agent, a Canadian professor who belatedly discovers Dada.

This seemingly haphazard juxtaposition of events, scenes, moods, and characters could have—should have—produced a hash of disjointed fragments. All the more wondrous then that the novel unrolls smoothly, gracefully, with the sensual impact of a gorgeous film, the separate scenes piling up relentlessly into a complex and subtle structure.

Škvorecký has communicated with force and precision the wrenching dislocation suffered by a whole generation of Central European exiled writers and intellectuals. But the novel can also be read as a provocative, illuminating document in the study of human memory.

The most significant payoff of this crazy-quilt technique is the way it allows Škvorecký to coax forth the multiple meanings of events, experiences, human acts. The lost time that he goes in search of is lost not because it has been forgotten, but because it has been tampered with—thematized, simplified, reduced to fit comfortable formulas and catchy slogans. Totalitarian regimes engage in this sort of tinkering consciously, for political gain, and on a scale approaching delusional thinking. On a lesser scale, it's an operation that we all engage in, all the time, to save psychic wear and tear. The very quality of live experience, after all, is its

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complexity and ambiguity, its contradictions and multi-facetedness; once we reduce some bit of experience to a single unequivocal meaning, we can file it away and cease living it. This handy trick is not to be despised. It saves us anguish and makes it possible for us to go on getting out of bed each morning.

Škvorecký jolts us out of this reductionist complacency and forces us to ransom abandoned meanings. No sooner do we catch on to the meaning of the action at hand, breathe a sigh of relief, and settle back to enjoy the rest of the story, than Škvorecký breaks off the action and offers a new scene. Each fresh juxtaposition sets all that has come before in a slightly different context, so that patterns of meaning coalesce, volatilize, and blossom into new patterns.

DANNY'S STORY—the adventures of the adolescent Smiřický—makes the point that human experience is far more complex and contradictory than we can bear, cognitively or emotionally. Danny's world is grim. In the last winter of the war, the inhabitants of Kostelec, a small town in the Bohemian mountains, suffer food shortages, forced labor, and fear of Gestapo reprisals. Many will not survive the war. And Danny's love, Nadia, is dying painfully from tuberculosis and malnutrition.

Yet the grimness and horror are punctuated by irreverent moments like the scene in which one of Danny's friends is caught by the Gestapo with a suitcase full of contraband pork. The boy attempts to argue that his suitcase contains only a single pig legally slaughtered by an uncle in the country. When the Gestapo officer forces him to lay out the parts on a table, a chillingly hilarious scene ensues as the boy struggles to shuffle the body parts around to hide the extraneous legs and hams. The Gestapo officer enjoys the boy's discomfort enormously:

> "Ein fünfbeiniges Schwein!"
> A five-legged pig. He said it as though it were a pleasant surprise.
> "That can't be right, sir," said Lenečeck. "My uncle must have got it mixed up."
> "What do you mean 'mixed up'?"
> "Well, a pig has only four legs, sir."
> "So the fifth one doesn't belong there?"
> "No, sir."
> "And where does it belong?"
> "Certainly not there," said Lenečeck unhappily.

In Danny's world, the meaning of human acts is equally shifting and contradictory. Take Danny's brief, inept career in sabotage, a plan for disarming the Messerschmidts that is a bit of adolescent folly conceived largely in order to impress a girl. Despite a few moments of very real terror, Danny's scheme comes to nothing. The Czech foreman in the Messerschmidt factory discovers the parts Danny has tampered with and the damage is repaired before the German authorities find out.

The issue of heroism takes on a different aspect as we meet another young saboteur, Přema, Danny's friend who has managed to blow up a German gasoline dump single-handedly. This act of heroism comes out of far more disinterested motives than did Danny's and is far more effective in hurting the German war effort. The saboteur has suffered for his deed, too. When Danny discovers him, Přema is hiding in his room, trying ineffectually to treat a nasty burn with Nivea. Danny fetches the doctor, a young man who seems oddly unimpressed by the act. In the face of such indifference, Přema can't quite help striking a self-congratulatory pose, and then the doctor lets him have it:

> "How many do you think they'll take, eh?"
> Přema was silent.
> "Fifteen? Twenty? Fifty?"
> Přema still said nothing.
> "And how many of those won't come back?"

Smiřický's footnote: "In the end they took forty-eight hostages, among them my own father. He came back but ten didn't."

THIS NOVEL has everything to recommend it: Škvorecký's crystal-clear prose, his unerring ear for the vernacular, plus a successful experiment in structure-without-a-structure.

Nonetheless, it may offend some people. Proponents of various isms may bridle—may, indeed, foam at the mouth—as they encounter some aspects of reality that they have had to deny energetically in order to keep their particular equation functioning. In this connection, I think with wicked relish of a scene from the novel in which a middle-aged Czech lady emigrée, faced with a literary work not in the mold of what she encountered at school, wails, "I don't understand and I don't want to understand." I recall also the four days I spent reading the novel, during which time I snapped at several people—we all indulge in our share of denial.

Why, then, read such a challenging, sometimes painful, always demanding book? There are two reasons. In the first place, once you start you won't have any choice, as Škvorecký is a most seductive storyteller; in the second, it will leave you a person of larger understanding, both wiser and more gentle. □

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Murray Seeger

Reporting on Russia

LIFE IN RUSSIA, by Michael Binyon. New York: Pantheon Books. 286 pp. $15.95.

RUSSIA AND THE RUSSIANS: INSIDE THE CLOSED SOCIETY, by Kevin Klose. New York: W. W. Norton. 350 pp. $17.50.

Where once reporters' books on Russia suffered rejection or were relegated to remainder shelves if published, détente, however brief, launched a flood of books about Russia by reporters. There is, obviously, a market for them.

No resident correspondent in Moscow knows enough of how the Central Committee and the Politburo work to write with authority as a Kremlinologist, and to do so readably. The one exception is *Le Monde*'s correspondent Michel Tatu, whose brilliant *Power in the Kremlin* was published in 1967. It is worth noting that he did much of his research at Columbia University.

WE NOW HAVE BEFORE US two new books. One is by Michael Binyon, who wrote from Moscow for the London *Times* from 1978 to 1982; the other is by Kevin Klose, who covered the same beat for the *Washington Post* from 1977 to 1981. They are quite different.

Binyon approaches his subject as a reporter who knows that most of his information about the Soviet Union will come from official sources, especially the press. Careful reading of every available publication, street observations, and the relatively few conversations a foreigner can arrange with Soviet citizens provide more information than many journalists anticipate when they first arrive in Moscow. However, Binyon admits that he avoided writing about the political dissidents because their concerns "are not the issues that are changing Soviet society."

Political dissidents and activitsts of the Jewish emigration movement were buried under police repression during Binyon's tenure. He may have been influenced by the experience of his predecessor, David Bonavia, who was expelled by Soviet authorities in 1972 for writing extensively about the new wave of dissidence. Readers of the London *Times* were deprived for six years of the kind of fresh reportage that American readers were getting from Moscow. The *Guardian*, competitor of the *Times*, compensated for having no resident correspondent in Moscow by making liberal use of reports from the *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times*.

During his tenure, Binyon wrote a steady stream of features on daily life in the Soviet Union that stood out in the dull pages of the *Times*. Many of those have been reedited for *Life in Russia*. Having previously lived for a year in the dreary provincial capital of Minsk as a teacher of English, Binyon was better prepared to face the oddities of Russian life than most Westerners. He could therefore explore the basic challenges that the mythical "Soviet man and woman" face in trying to meet their economic quotas at work, caring for their health, and enjoying what little leisure they have.

Binyon delves deeply into two facets of Soviet life that have prime importance: the overburdened role of women, and the odd, rebellious behavior of youth. He finds humor in unexpected places. The book's chief weakness, however, is in the meager political analysis Binyon attempts. His assignment covered an eccentric period in Soviet history—the rapid turnover at the top following the deaths of both Brezhnev and Andropov. This disruption in what had been the most stable of political systems was a new phenomenon and deserves more attention than Binyon gives it. Still, his survey of the human side of Soviet life is among the best in recent books out of Moscow.

IF BINYON TOOK a macrojournalistic approach to Soviet society, Kevin Klose took the micro alternative. The *Washington Post*'s man explores in great detail the lives of a few important Soviet citizens who have challenged the political system and paid

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horrible penalties for their apostasy. Most important of these cases are those of Alexei Nikitin, who attempted to form a true workers' trade union, and of Yelena Bonner, wife of Andrei Sakharov, and Ruf Bonner, her mother.

The story of Nikitin is particularly important since he has received much less attention in the Western press than some other dissidents. Through Nikitin, Klose is able to tell more about how Russian workers really struggle for their daily wages than most reporters have. This story is graphic evidence of the particularly sadistic form of living death the KGB has developed for dissidents in its "special" psychiatric clinics. An expert witness to this barbarity is Dr. Anatoli Koryagin, a psychiatrist who rejected the official diagnosis of Nikitin's alleged mental illness and was sent to prison camp for this and other "crimes."

What Klose has to say about the Bonners is particularly important because Sakharov's own battle with Soviet authority has blocked from outside view the poignant history of these women. The Chernenko regime has now taken direct legal action against Yelena Bonner, effectively cutting all communication from Sakharov to the outside world. Klose also explains why she is so important a political figure in her own right.

Despite these important contributions to our full knowledge of Soviet society, Klose's book is weak in historical research. He has rewritten material from other readily available sources, and the book is therefore deficient in original content. He reports as fact many personal conversations and incidents that he could not have witnessed, the way he writes knowingly about Sakharov without having met the man.

Klose does offer a new look at one of the more notorious Moscow characters, Victor Louis, the KGB specialist in disinformation. While expressing a healthy dislike for Louis, Klose misses some of the more nefarious aspects of his activities.

Klose acknowledges substantial assistance from another former Moscow correspondent, David Satter, an American who reported for the *Financial Times* of London. Having read many of Satter's excellent reports, and the frequent references to him here, one wonders what Satter's book would be like. □

AT FIRST GLANCE *(continued from p. 131)*

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who looked like nothing so much as satanic marionettes.

The picture I like best is one never taken. It was the day following the Sunday march, and a couple dozen of us, all who could fit in the back of a small moving van, were cleaning out the pasture where the marchers would camp their first night on the road. Without enough rakes and shovels to go around, it was slow going. But the sun was warm, and we knew we would finish long before evening. Suddenly a caravan of cars pulled up along the highway. We were too far away to make out their shouts, but we could see the rebel flags draped over their car hoods, and we had no trouble guessing what they were thinking.

Hemmed in as we were by barbed wire, there was no place to run or hide. We stood there, hoping the men in the cars did not have guns; then by some wordless signal we went back to work. After a while, the shouting stopped, and the men drove away. Had they done nothing because there were so many of us? Or had they simply not brought guns? We had no way of telling. But for a moment we had felt the kind of fear the Selma organizers struggled with all the time, and we knew we were lucky. There was nowhere else we wanted to be.

□

I was in graduate school at Brown at the time of Selma, and when I returned North, I wrote a short article for the school paper on what I had seen. A week later the hate calls started. Always obscene. Always at night. I could never bring myself to hang up on my callers, just as a year later, working and teaching in Mississippi, I could never quite bring myself to admit that people like me no longer had a useful role to play in the civil rights movement. I kept thinking the right photo would do the trick, change the feelings that were making it so difficult for whites and blacks to get along. It did not, I believed, matter who took the photo or who was in it. Only that it caught both the terror and the hope that being in the South in those years always came back to. □

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LETTERS

The Influence of FDR

Editors:

In your Winter 1985 issue, *Dissent*'s reviewer, Leo P. Ribuffo, is distressed by the fact that my book *In the Shadow of FDR: From Harry Truman to Ronald Reagan* has received such a "warm reception," and he attributes the critical acclaim to the mindless hospitality of reviewers to liberal doctrine. Perhaps so. Certainly, it is true that almost the only unfavorable notices have come in periodicals hostile to liberalism, though until now they have all been on the far right. But as I have reread the reviews in preparing a revision of the book for a paperback edition, I have been struck by how little attention was paid to the presumed outlook of the author and how much to the historical question he was raising.

That is hardly surprising, for I conceived of the book neither as a celebration of liberalism nor as an exaltation of Roosevelt but rather as an effort to deal with a particular historical problem: the influence of a political leader on his successors, a subject that, curiously, historians had not dealt with before. I read widely in the history of other lands, other times, and found some suggestive treatments in works such as Merrill Peterson's on Jefferson's image, Miguel Bretos's on Simon Bolivar, and Jonathan Spence's on K'ang-hsi, but none that was directly apposite on the impact of a head of state on those who succeeded him.

The dearth of historical literature created a second, and even more imposing, problem—that there were almost no published sources on which to draw. In writing about FDR and the Supreme Court or the history of America since 1945, as I am now doing, I can count on an all but overwhelming trove of books and essays. But neither a book nor even a substantial article had ever been written about FDR and his followers. As a result, I had to construct the narrative in very large part from original sources. I not only spent many days in five different presidential archives—from Boston to Abilene—but consulted more than 150 manuscript collections and over 190 oral history memoirs at places such as Laramie, Wyoming, Thibodaux, Louisiana, and Brunswick, Maine. More than one reviewer has indicated that much, indeed most, of the material has never appeared in print before.

If, in seeking a meaning for the materials I had unearthed, I could not turn to a historical model, I found that the subject I was exploring was of the liveliest interest to literary critics who, in works such as Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence* and W. Jackson Bate's *The Burden of the Past and the English Poet*, have been directly concerned with the "shadow" phenomenon. They have wanted to understand how poets and novelists have coped with the overbearing sense that a great figure who has gone before them has appeared to preempt the field, with the lament of Robert Burton that "we can say nothing but what has been said," and with T. S. Eliot's perception, "When a great poet has lived, certain things have been done once for all, and cannot be achieved again." More recently, in her brilliant catalogue essay, *Blam!: The Explosion of Pop, Minimalism, and Performance, 1958-1964*, Barbara Haskell has noted an artist's complaint, "De Kooning had already painted all my paintings," and she has attributed the emergence of a new aesthetic in these years to the attempt of artists to escape the shadow cast by the Abstract Expressionists.

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In writing *In The Shadow of FDR*, I sought to do what had not been done previously—to move this preoccupation of literary critics to the sphere of political history, to ask what meaning the memory of Franklin D. Roosevelt has had for his successors. This is the kind of question that now appears to be increasingly attractive to historians working independently in the most diverse fields. Some months ago, in fact, Michael Kammen suggested that the book could be seen as part of an emerging historiographical genre that includes such works as an examination of the cult of the Virgin Mary and Nina Tumarkin's fascinating *Lenin Lives!* And it is in that context, I believe, that the book can best be understood, not as a filiopietistic study of FDR.

If I had intended to write an apotheosis of Rooseveltian liberalism, the book would have had a very different form. One could imagine a volume in which the author painstakingly shows how the great and good FDR cast his benign influence on each of a series of grateful successors. But the account is altogether different. I have shown how Truman resented being thought of as a caretaker; how Eisenhower, contrary to general impression, detested Roosevelt and the New Deal; how Kennedy insisted that the 1930s were not pertinent to his own day; how Johnson wanted not merely to emulate FDR but to excel him; how Carter, despite launching his campaign from Warm Springs, encountered difficulty with the Roosevelt myth; and how Reagan's relation to the hero of his youth has been shot through with ambiguity. Moreover, the question of how great a president FDR really was is, though important, not central to my inquiry. For what each of his successors had to deal with was not the historical Roosevelt but the myth of FDR, and any awareness they had of how far the real Roosevelt fell short of the myth could only have augmented their frustration.

Yet it is true that I do not believe that the myth of FDR is fabricated out of nothing, and I have not been persuaded by the writings of New Left historians who view the New Deal as a regrettable episode. I did not challenge their view in this book, which would have been inappropriate, but I have done so in a volume of essays edited by Harvard Sitkoff that Knopf is about to publish.

In brief, I think that to develop a credible synthesis of the New Deal, one first needs a usable dialectic; that

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the New Left perspective is all antithesis; and that one needs to restore a sense of how much Roosevelt and the New Deal achieved, while continuing to point out the shortcomings of both. It is suggested that in taking that attitude I have become less analytical, but it does seem a strange mode of categorization to equate "analytical" with how unfriendly you are toward FDR. In truth, I think that any historian who does not recognize the significance of the growth of the state in the Roosevelt years is missing a central chapter in the history of 20th-century America.

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One final point. Authors are often much better served by critical reviews than by approving ones, and in moving into an uncharted field such as the "shadow" genre, I appreciate all the help I can get. But critics do bear the responsibility for examining the evidence. Sentences like "Leuchtenburg's political light meter goes haywire when it places Richard Nixon in the shadow of FDR" do not advance any dialogue. I started to write about Nixon and Roosevelt with the expectation that no more than a few paragraphs would be required to demonstrate the lack of any relationship. But after perusing not only all of the books and articles on Nixon, but materials from such original sources as the Helen Gahagan Douglas papers at the University of Oklahoma, oral history memoirs at California State, Fullerton, the Duke University archives, and the transcript of Nixon's extensive interview with David Brinkley made available to me by ABC, I found the conclusion inescapable that FDR was a large presence in Nixon's life. Since publishing the book, I have come upon a statement in the *New York Times* in August 1984 by a former Nixon speech-writer stressing that point and upon Michael W. Miles's observation in *The Odyssey of the American Right*, "The New Deal and the 1930s were still the yardstick by which Nixon wanted to measure the historic significance of his presidency." If authors are to be held to high standards, and they should be, so should reviewers, and a willingness to confront evidence and a commitment to civil discourse are good places to start.

WILLIAM E. LEUCHTENBURG
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

LEO RIBUFFO Replies

Readers of Professor Leuchtenburg's angry letter who missed my review will be surprised to learn that I noted "interesting insights" in his book, nowhere doubted his legendary capacity for research, and paraphrased his arguments fully before questioning some of them. Our conflicting assessments of *In the Shadow of FDR* derive not from my failure to "confront evidence" but from differing conceptions of what constitutes the best evidence.

As Leuchtenburg's letter illustrates, he relies heavily on what later presidents said about FDR. Certainly these statements, carefully evaluated, tell something about Roosevelt's influence, and such literary critics as Harold Bloom may help us to find deeper meaning in them. Yet students of poetry and the presidency ask different kinds of questions, explore different materials, and often need divergent methods. Since few poets initiate social legislation, dispatch troops, or seek votes, critics like Bloom can plausibly, if not always convincingly, limit the search for "influence" to the explication of texts. Historians of the presidency must (as I stressed in the review) pay at least as much attention to their subjects' actions as to their words. Writing an analysis is not synonymous with being "unfriendly," yet neither does it mean compiling accolades and accusations uttered in retrospect. Close reading is a valuable tool and empathy an admirable trait, but no more so than the ability to make necessary comparisons and select evidence appropriate to the questions at hand.

A brief look at two presidencies illustrates my basic disagreement with Leuchtenburg. No matter where we rank them in the presidential ratings game, historians judging FDR's influence on Lyndon Johnson need to decide in what significant ways Great Society *programs* differed from New Deal *programs*. I posed this question, an update of the perennial question concerning continuity within American progressivism, partly because I haven't made up my own mind. Leuchtenburg, who ignores this issue in his book and again in his long reply, apparently still considers deeds irrelevant to the discussion of influence. Furthermore, instead of denying that FDR was a "large presence" in Richard Nixon's life, I credited Nixon with a good understanding of his predecessor. Leuchtenburg exaggerates FDR's impact, however, because he ignores the greater influence of Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Dwight D. Eisenhower. Is it fair to demand such comparisons from a book called *In the Shadow of FDR*? I think so. A literary critic who placed Allen Ginsberg in Whitman's "shadow" might legitimately be asked whether Blake exerted greater influence.

Leuchtenburg may not have intended to write a "celebration of liberalism" or an "exaltation of Roosevelt." Nevertheless, much as Harold Bloom needs some fixed conception of a great poet in order to measure "swerves" by successors, Leuchtenburg required a normative Roosevelt, and the FDR he presented looks better than current scholarship warrants. Eisenhower, Carter, and Nixon (misrepresented as an unrelenting foe of New Deal social legislation) receive less than their due. On the other hand, Leuchtenburg tends to discount Roosevelt's dangerous legacies, minimizing, for example, connections between FDR's politicization of intelligence agencies and later abuses under Johnson and Nixon. Perhaps I am too hard on Roosevelt and too soft on his successors. If so, my lapse is not unique (nor is it confined to the "New Left"). In 1976, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities—the Church Committee—saw a line of political harassment stretching from Roosevelt through Johnson to Nixon. Among others, Leuchtenburg's colleague Otis Graham

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has documented Nixon's affinity for social planning and extension of the welfare state. Contrary positions on these issues can of course be argued. At this point, however, they can no longer be simply asserted.

Although the enthusiastic reviews Leuchtenburg received in the *American Historical Review*, *Journal of American History*, *Washington Post*, and *New York Times Book Review* brought me no "distress," they did prompt reflections on a mood within the historical profession. There, the Reagan era has produced less conservatism or neoconservatism than a rallying around FDR and the New Deal. Thus most historians are less likely than ever to agree with—or even consider seriously—the minority view that basic defects marred Roosevelt's version of liberalism. Even more than his book, Leuchtenburg's letter illustrates my point. In his book, he merely passed over FDR's scholarly critics; now he parodies their views.

Leuchtenburg does not specify whom he means by "New Left historians," and the label itself, a product of polemics during the 1960s, sheds more heat than light. Suffice it to say that the best revisionist interpretations (including synthetic essays by Barton Bernstein, Howard Zinn, and William Appleman Williams, as well as many monographs) do not dismiss the New Deal as a "regrettable episode." Rather, their central theme is that, despite constraints imposed by American politics and ideology, the Roosevelt administration could have done more to provide unemployment relief, restructure the economy, protect the civil rights of blacks and Japanese-Americans, rescue European Jews, and perhaps avoid war with Japan.

This is my position, at any rate, and Leuchtenburg should be able to distinguish it from the "hostility" to liberalism he finds among reviewers in "far right" periodicals (apparently *Commentary* and *National Review*). Moreover, the complex debate over the New Deal's meaning cannot be reduced to a case of illiberal leftists and rightists assailing a pragmatic center. Prominent academic critics include the self-proclaimed Jeffersonian Paul Conkin and such "realist" interpreters of foreign policy as Paul Schroeder and Bruce Russett. At the same time, FDR's fervent defenders include unreconstructed veterans of the Popular Front (and often their professorial children) who believe that he would have avoided the Cold War.

Although my critique of Leuchtenburg was more methodological than ideological, there was a moral present. Since the Progressive era, liberals have exaggerated the ability of benign presidents to transform the social order and international relations. Especially during the New Deal, but also during the first part of the Kennedy, Johnson, and Carter administrations, those farther left were susceptible to similar illusions. Then, when disappointment set in, liberals and radicals mixed burn-out with the quest for a new hero.

Believing that increased awareness of the difficulty of structural change might produce better presidencies and mitigate the cycle of reform boom and bust, I used my review to reiterate a venerable minority position: "reform enthusiasms pass quickly, leaving basic problems unsolved; progress depends on grass-roots pressure as well as a receptive White House; and no president deserves uncritical support." Unfortunately, we lack an opportunity to give critical support to a Mondale administration. Still, my advice may serve to inhibit fantasies about a forthcoming Age of Hart, Cuomo, Bill Bradley, or Edward Kennedy. □

Economic Democracy

Editors:

Allen Graubard [in "Ideas of Economic Democracy," *Dissent*, Fall 1984] draws a contrast between "the current libertarian vision of a Leviathan state destroying individual liberties . . . " and " . . . the actuality of state involvement in economic affairs, which is primarily to aid business. . . . " I am somewhat puzzled by this contrast. Graubard seems to imply that state economic intervention in aid of business is beneficial to individual liberties, and that a Leviathan state would necessarily be hostile to business. This is a surprising view to find suggested in *Dissent*, which, as a democratic socialist journal, presumably is committed to defending the rights of individuals against oppressions instituted by business. It does not seem to accord with the historical record, in which businesses have too often taken actions harming individual liberty. Beyond these considerations, it is hardly a viewpoint that libertarians would accept.

I can understand how Graubard might have gained the opposite impression, in that the political strategy favored by a large faction within libertarianism has been to appeal to somewhat the same population as has responded to Reagan, Hart, or Jarvis: a population with a primarily economic definition of liberty, insufficiently critical of the corporate system from which its income is derived, and fairly conventional in life-style and in cultural and social views. I will not, therefore, suggest that Graubard has simply projected his own views (if they *are* his own views) onto libertarianism. But the core of the libertarian viewpoint, as expressed in the works of such authors as David Friedman and Murray Rothbard, is intensely critical of corporate capitalism and the bureaucratic, centralized pattern of organization it has imposed on American society. It recognizes the claims of liberty in spheres other than the economic, and vigorously opposes any inequality of rights based on religion, race, sex, age, class, or nationality; in this it is far removed from the conservatism of the Reagan administration. It does not defend either the established present or any historical period of the past as the ideal, but seeks to find examples in both to guide its efforts toward a future founded in views deeply critical of the present.

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Inasmuch as American society is dominated by corporate capitalist enterprises, many of the state interventions and oppressions libertarians criticize are products of these enterprises' influence. I am surprised to see Graubard discussing libertarianism in vague generalizations that a modest amount of research could have shown him to be poorly founded.

Certainly, the libertarian vision and the democratic socialist one are deeply at odds. At a certain level, libertarianism favors certain aspects of the Reagan administration of which *Dissent*'s contributors will surely be critical. But, at a deeper level, the two have important things in common. Both adhere to ethical standards that require them to attack established abuses of power, and defend individuals against these abuses. The likely military and religious policies of the Reagan administration will create many more such abuses, which they both will need to oppose, an effort in which both will need allies. And, if the libertarian movement is to regain the vitality it has begun to lose during the latest elections and political realignments, it will need to realize this. Libertarianism is an oppositional philosophy, and there is a great deal for it to oppose in Ronald Reagan and the triumph of corporate capitalism.

William H. Stoddard
Chula Vista, California □

Camus's Algerian War

Editors:

Michael Walzer's essay "Commitment and Social Criticism: Camus's Algerian War" (*Dissent*, Fall 1984) offers a sympathetic portrait of Albert Camus in two different roles: as a courageous social critic, at a time when his people remained securely in power; and as a citizen who withdrew from the writing of criticism, when his people came under a physical threat from outside. In seeking to honor Camus in the second of these roles, Walzer aims at something larger than the rehabilitation of a man of good faith. For him, Camus is an instance of the "connected" critic, the insider who acknowledges his ties to a community even as he works to expose its injustices.

A problem for any admirer of Camus is his refusal to speak of Algerian politics throughout his last years. This silence Walzer chooses to regard as an implicit act of criticism: it is "eloquent in its hopelessness." If so, it was an eloquence that meant different things to different people, unlike the eloquence of public speech. But Walzer's line of defense raises a more general question. How often, and at what cost, will a loyal critic feel compelled to withdraw into a silence like Camus's?

I would argue that silence here becomes the rule rather than the exception, whenever the critic feels (a) that the very survival of his community is imperiled; and (b) that those who constitute the peril have suffered great injustices from the community itself. Crises of this sort ought to be rare but in fact they are common: the French in Algeria, the British in India, and the Israelis in West Bank settlements, disparate as they are in other respects, pose comparable difficulties for the critic who wants to preserve a governing community and its way of life. The trouble is that the meaning of *survival* is infinitely elastic. Nor can the ambiguity be solved by attempts at redefinition, for the difficulty lies in the nature of a community's self-love.

Survival to the French in Algeria, for example, could mean the retention of political sovereignty, or of a disproportionate degree of power. Or it could mean continued economic well-being (short of expropriation); or geographical integrity (short of relocation); or simply life (short of extinction). Confronted with these doubts, the critic is someone who tells his community which outcomes would be tolerable, and why. He tries to reason morally, but with a full sense of his people's fate.

What, then, of the critic who gives Camus's apology for renouncing his task: "I believe in justice, but I will defend my mother before justice." Walzer reads this as a confession of sentiments more human than the "hard-won impartiality" of Sartre and de Beauvoir. But his preference still leaves a puzzle about the two kinds of critics. Granted, impartiality can "slide into cold indifference," yet the warmth of Camus's morality is what stopped him from speaking. Walzer cites, as a motive for Camus's silence, the fear of terrorist reprisals against his family, and seems to view this as part of a necessary complex of motives for the critic who admits "primary loyalties." When, however, Camus hopes that his society like his family "will survive at least and, by surviving, have a chance to show its fairness," he makes an appeal that may justify his action and immobility alike. While I agree with Walzer that the appeal is sympathetic, I cannot see that it affords a premise for criticism. Indeed, once the critic speaks in these tones, his testimony is indistinguishable from that of the citizen with a bad conscience. He is giving notice in advance that, in spite of his protests, he will cooperate with everything the community demands for "survival."

Honest witnesses have their own value. But one lesson of Camus's later career would seem to be that attachments beyond a certain intensity make the work of criticism untenable. This is not to say that we can do without attachments, only that those who feel them palpably, and at every step, cease to function as critics however they may continue as poets. They may still see things in a personal light but can no longer contribute to change them. Walzer admires the loyalist critic for his concern with "the complexity of love," as against the detached critic's commitment to an abstract justice ("As if the critic plucked his principles from the sky"). The distinction follows from a belief that critics stand somewhere and not nowhere.

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For Walzer, this does not imply a skeptical attack on justice; it does, however, show the need for a further distinction, between love and power: "Justice is a judgment on power, not on love." I quote this last sentence from a recent essay of Walzer's on another French critic, Julien Benda ("The Politics of the Intellectual," in *Conflict and Consensus*, Walter W. Powell and Richard Robbins, eds., New York: Free Press, 1984), but its pertinence to his argument on Camus seems clear enough. The critic, evidently, is to criticize power, and to speak for a justice that defers to love. Well, but love of what? It may be argued that Camus's love of Algeria was extraordinarily free and pure. But if we take it for granted that the French community to which he was loyal, to the point of silence, was itself interested in power, then the notion of "a judgment on power, not on love" becomes a curious mystification.

As I understand it, Walzer's objection to Sartre and de Beauvoir is not that they lacked feelings of love and attachment, but rather that they felt no allegiance to any existing community. This is a large defect, and Walzer suggests how far it limits both the influence and practicability of "existentialist" criticism in general. Without a sure constituency to bring his various interests into coherence, the detached critic is driven unavoidably to a series of extreme postures, in the hope of satisfying his momentary instinct for justice. Walzer gives less attention to the shortcomings of the loyalist critic: above all, his liability to imagine a dramatic contrast between love and power, and to persuade himself that by declaring his allegiance to the former he renounces all connection with the latter. *My mother or justice*: as if I stood beside my helpless mother while the rest battled unfeelingly for justice, whereas the truth is that my friends will avenge with arms what I protect in silence. Walzer, it seems to me, overrates the impotence of a figure like Camus, who is neither so weak nor so special as the idea of an unempowered love makes him appear.

The argument against the detached critic depends on an additional observation that carries a good deal of weight itself. Plainly, such a critic will not as a rule get a serious hearing from his countrymen, for his sentiments seem to place him outside their shared situation. Compared to the loyalist, the critic who consents to this disability may seem unreliable and even absurd, as he changes his attitude from one issue to the next. Yet are there not times when a principled recalcitrance effects a good that is denied to consistency and humanity? When the French withdrew from Algeria, it was Sartre and not Camus whom de Gaulle chose for his tribute: "As Sartre goes, so goes France." It hardly matters whether this was a joke or not: the point is that nothing could be said about Camus. His very gifts as a critic, his attachment to a place, a people, a way of life were his undoing in Algeria. They restricted the matter to be discussed almost before the discussion began, and his silence was an enforcement of the same restriction by other means.

David Bromwich
Princeton, N.J.

Michael Walzer Replies

Perhaps I made too much of Camus's "silence"; or perhaps he made too much of it. In any case, I think that I should set the record straight before turning to the deeper issues raised by David Bromwich's probing letter. Camus published his first articles on Algeria in 1939; he wrote regularly about Algerian politics until 1958 (four years after the war began) when he brought out a collection of his most important pieces with a long introduction. During the two years that remained before his death in 1960, he wrote nothing more. But it is not quite right to say that he was silent, since people continued to buy and read and argue about his book. It is not that he didn't have a position during those last years, only that he didn't have a new position. He stood fast by the principles he had defended over the years—though he may no longer have believed that there was much chance of those principles winning out. No French Algerian fighting to maintain French hegemony and resisting every compromise could possibly have imagined that Camus was on his side.

One more point before the deeper issues: "the French in Algeria, the British in India, and the Israelis in West Bank settlements" are not comparable cases and don't "pose comparable difficulties." The French in Algeria were a community of some million and a half people; farmers, workers, professionals; rich and poor; left and right. The British in India were largely an administrative and military cadre, an elite of rulers, not of settlers. The West Bank settlers of the last ten years are not a community or a cadre but a faction, drawn mostly from the extreme right of Israel's political spectrum. One might well feel differently about the survival, security, well-being of such very different groups.

The last example has been raised by other readers of my Camus essay, who suggest (as Bromwich does not) that I was really writing in Aesopian fashion about the contemporary Middle East. If so, the message should have been clear: an Israeli Camus would support the Labor and left parties in their search for a compromise peace. He would be, as Camus himself was for many years, "someone who tells his community what outcomes would be tolerable, and why." Only if the success, say, of a PLO terrorist campaign undercut the left and made compromise impossible might he feel compelled to fall silent. That was what Camus faced at the end: he still had a position (he still had, it seems to me, the right position) but no ground left to stand on.

Now: is the critic served by his connection, his loyalty, his love? That is a question I hope to be writing about, in a variety of ways, over the next several years, and I don't have an easy answer. David Bromwich recognizes the moral advantages of connection, but he worries about its liabilities. It's not so much that love is blind, on his view, as that it is ("beyond a certain intensity") impotent—incapable, that is, of changing its object.

Camus, as Bromwich describes him, is a social critic debilitated by his attachment, who could not at the end

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challenge the society to which he was attached. He would not have been impotent, however, had he not loved so well, for the challenge was still politically possible. Maybe so, though it's not always the case that success, even moral success, is waiting if only we say the right words. And in this case, the effort to change *pied noir* politics was made infinitely more difficult by the work of detached critics like Sartre, who were entirely indifferent to the fate of the men and women Camus loved.

Bromwich wants us to admire "principled recalcitrance," and I am more than ready to do that, at least sometimes. But why wasn't Camus's refusal to endorse either the position of the FLN or the position of the *pied noir* majority an example of principled recalcitrance?

In fact, the connected social critic can still say no to his own people, even when survival is at stake; it's just that he can't give up his principled interest in survival. I can't see that detachment makes things easier or better. What principles were served, for example, by Sartre's absolute refusal to criticize the politics of the FLN? He was liberated from his own love, not from other people's; recalcitrant in France; endlessly acquiescent in the Third World. Perhaps that took courage (though Joseph Frank argued persuasively in the last *Dissent* that, in Sartre's circle, it would have taken more courage to break with the FLN), and perhaps we ought to admire that courage. But the Algeria that Sartre helped to create is by no means an admirable society, and it was Camus, because of his connection, who saw what was coming and, silent or not, refused to turn a blind eye. □

Speak Up for Human Rights in Cuba

Editors:

We all have been long-standing opponents, in our writings and actions, of U.S. intervention in the affairs of Latin American and Caribbean countries. While we have varying views of the Castro government in Cuba, we are greatly disturbed by the case of Ariel Hidalgo, a Cuban leftist writer, historian, and educator.

Ariel Hidalgo was first arrested in 1980 when he faced a rock-throwing group and loudly protested their attack on a student who was seeking to leave the country during the exodus of Cubans from the port of Mariel. Hidalgo was freed, but he was arrested again in 1981.

Hidalgo was eventually convicted and sentenced to eight years in prison under the Fifth Section (titled "Enemy Propaganda"), article 108–1 of the Cuban Penal Code, which punishes any person "who, (a) incites against the social order, international solidarity or the socialist State by means of oral or written propaganda, or any other form; (b) makes, distributes, or possesses propaganda of the character mentioned in the preceding clause." In fact, Hidalgo was sentenced to the maximum term of one to eight years established by this law.

At his brief one-session political trial, unmentioned in the Cuban press, Hidalgo was only allowed to say a few words at the conclusion of the proceedings. The government's case consisted of testimony by the local neighborhood defense committee, which spoke of Hidalgo's "talking too much." The prosecution chose not to mention that the police had seized an unpublished manuscript in which Hidalgo attempts to demonstrate that a new ruling class has taken over the "socialist" countries including Cuba. Furthermore, he argues that this class should be forthrightly opposed.

For simply expressing his views, Hidalgo spent the first 14 months in jail in deplorable conditions—solitary confinement in the Combinado del Este prison near Havana. He was then moved to a regular cell, and his wife (but not his daughter) could visit him once a month for two hours. He still was, however, not allowed to receive writing or reading materials. Since August 1984, even these monthly visits have been prohibited.

We believe that Hidalgo's trial, the law under which he was punished, and the prison conditions he is enduring fail to meet the most elementary standards of human rights.

Consistent with our stand in support of struggles for freedom and self-determination throughout the world, we ask the Cuban government to release Ariel Hidalgo, and any other persons whose rights have been similarly denied.

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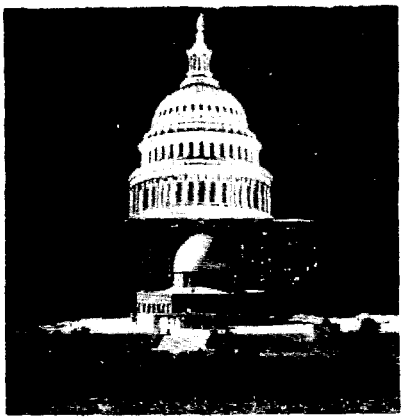

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